

S E R M O N S

Preached upon
Several Occasions.

By *W. SHERLOCK*, D. D.
Late Dean of St. *Paul's*, Master of the *Temple*,
and Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

The FOURTH EDITION.



L O N D O N:

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MDCCCLV.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,
Sir JOHN CHAPMAN,
LORD-MAYOR

OF THE
City of LONDON.

My Lord,

IN Obedience to the Order I received from your Lordship and the Court of Aldermen, I present you with this plain Sermon; the whole Design of which is, not to debate any thing, nor to determine on which Side the Truth lies, in those warm Disputes which have been among us; but to convince all those, who *love and pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, how many Controversies there are, which should be laid aside without Disputing, and how a little Condescension to each other, may either happily unite us into one Communion, or at least teach us

a

to

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to live together in Love and Charity, notwithstanding some different Apprehensions of Things; and I hope so charitable a Design as this, will raise no new Disputes and Quarrels among us.

That GOD would preserve his Church, restore Peace and Unity among Christians, bless this great and populous City, and direct your Lordship in the Government of it, in these difficult Times, is the hearty Prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most Obedient Servant,

W. SHERLOCK.

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Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light,

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*light, and light for darkneſs; that
put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for
bitter. Wo unto them that are wiſe
in their own eyes, and prudent in
their own ſight.*



To



T O T H E
R E A D E R.

AL L the Account I have to give of publishing this Volume of Sermons, is only this; that most of them were printed before by public Authority, or by such Applications to me as were equivalent to Commands: And my Bookseller having a mind to reprint those Sermons which he had an Interest in, desired me to add some few more, to make a just Volume: The Choice I have made of such as I have added, was not for the sake of any curious Composition, or new Conceits,

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ceits, much less for Wit and Satire;
but I chose such as I hoped might be
most useful in such an Age as this;
and if they shall do any Good, which
I heartily beg of God they may, I
have all that I aimed at.

WILL. SHERLOCK.



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W. SHERLOCK, D. D. late Dean
of St. Paul's: viz.

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S E R M O N I.

Preached before the Lord-Mayor, at
Guildhall Chapel, on Sunday, No-
vember 4, 1688.

P S A L M cxxii. 6, 7.

*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they
shall prosper that love thee. Peace
be within thy walls, and prospe-
rity within thy palaces.*

THOUGH the particular Time and
Occasion of penning this *Psalm* is
uncertain, yet so much is plain,
that it was after *David* had set-
tled the Ark at *Jerusalem*, and made that
City the Place of God's House, and of re-
ligious Worship, and the Seat of Justice and
Judgment. There was the House of God,
ver. 9. that is, though the Temple was not
Vol. I. B yet

yet built, if this *Pſalm* was compoſed by *David*, as the Title of it ſignifies it was, yet there was the Tabernacle and the Ark of God, which formerly was in *Shiloh*, and afterwards removed from one Place to another, till *David* ſettled it in *Jeruſalem*: Thither all the Tribes of *Iſrael* were to reſort three times a Year, to worſhip God before the Ark of the Teſtimony, *ver.* 4. There was the imperial Seat, where *David* had built his Throne and Palace, and where his Poſterity were to dwell and govern *Iſrael*; and therefore it was the Seat of Juſtice too, as that muſt be, where the King's Throne and the Houſe of God was placed. *There are ſet thrones of judgment, the thrones of the houſe of David,* *ver.* 5. Theſe were the peculiar Privileges of *Jeruſalem*, above any other City in *Jury*. This was the Reaſon of that peculiar Affection and paſſionate Concern, which *David* had himſelf, and exhorts all others to expreſs for *Jeruſalem*, that he greatly rejoiced to go thither, and to continue there. *I was glad when they ſaid unto me, let us go into the houſe of the Lord; our feet ſhall ſtand within thy gates, O Jeruſalem.* That he exhorts all People to pray for the Peace and Proſperity of *Jeruſalem*, and promiſes a Bleſſing to thoſe who love it; as it is in my Text, *Pray for the peace of Jeruſalem, they ſhall proſper that love thee; peace be within thy walls, and proſperity within thy palaces.*

palaces. All this was not for the sake of the material Buildings, the Beauty of the Place, or the Conveniency of its Situation, but because it was the Center of Unity; *Which is builded as a city that is compact together: whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord,* ver. 3, 4. Which shews in what respect he commends *Jerusalem*, that it is *built as a city, which is compact together*; not with regard to the Uniformity and regular Order and Union of its material Buildings, but that it was the Center of a religious Unity and Order in Worship, where all the Tribes of *Israel* met and united in the same Acts of Worship and Praise to God. There was the House of God, there were the set Thrones of Judgment. So that to love *Jerusalem*, to pray for the Peace and Prosperity of it, is to love the House, the Worship, the Name of God; to love and pray for the Unity, Happiness, and Prosperity of the Church, for the flourishing State of Religion, and the peaceful Opportunities of worshipping God in his holy Temple, together with the equal and impartial Administration of Justice, which is so much for the public Good, to promote the temporal and eternal Happiness of Men, that our Love to Mankind, but especially our Love to the Brethren, as well as our Zeal for God's Glory and Worship, requires this of us; *For*

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my brethren and companions sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee: because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good, ver. 8, 9.

Thus I have given you a very plain and easy Exposition of this whole *Psalm*, and therein have sufficiently explained my Text. I have but one Thing more to add, to make way for my intended Discourse, and that is, to shew you, that this Exhortation does directly, and not merely by Accommodation and Analogy, concern Us, as well as it did the *Jews*.

For *Jerusalem* was but a Type of the Christian Church, as the carnal *Israel*, or the carnal Seed and Posterity of *Abraham* were of true and sincere Christians, who are the Children of *Abraham*, by Faith in Christ: And therefore St. *Paul* expressly distinguishes between the earthly *Jerusalem*, and the *Jerusalem* which descends from above, *Gal. iv. 25, 26.* For this *Agar* is mount *Sinai* in *Arabia*, and answereth to *Jerusalem* which now is, and is in bondage with her Children; but *Jerusalem* which is above, (or from above, that is, the Christian Church) is free, which is the mother of us all. Which in *Heb. xii. 22.* he calls mount *Sion*, the city of the living God, the heavenly *Jerusalem*. And *Rev. iii. 12.* It is called, *The city of God*, the new *Jerusalem*, which cometh down out of heaven from God. And *Rev. xxi. 2.* The new *Jerusalem* coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for

for her husband: Which is a Description of the most reformed and purified State of the Christian Church on Earth. So that this Exhortation, to *pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, does most properly belong to Christians, because the Christian Church is the true *Jerusalem*, the new, the holy *Jerusalem*, descending out of Heaven from God, *ver. 10.*

By this time, I suppose, you understand the Meaning of my Text, and how much we are concerned in it; and there are two Parts observable in the Words: I. The Duty to *pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, or of the Christian Church; *Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.* II. The Encouragement to this, *They shall prosper that love thee.*

It is the first of these I shall at present speak to, the Duty to *pray for the peace of Jerusalem*; wherein I shall consider Two Things,

I. What we must pray for.

II. How necessary Prayer is, to obtain these Blessings.

I. What we must pray for: *Peace and Prosperity. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.*

Now the Peace of the Church signifies two Things:

1. The Unity and Agreement of Christians among themselves.

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2. The

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2. The Preservation of the Church from

I. The ¹¹Unity and Agreement of Christi-

This I am sure, that though Divisions

their other Crimes by a factious Zeal: And therefore if ever we desire to see Christianity flourish, we must pray heartily for Peace and Unity among Christians.

But that we may the better understand what we are to pray for, let us briefly inquire, wherein the Unity of the Church consists; and that is, in the Unity of Faith, the Unity of Communion, and the Unity of Love and Charity.

1st. Unity of Faith: Whereby I do not understand, that all Christians must agree in all the Opinions and Speculations of Religion; it would be well if it could be so; but this can never be, while men have such different Understandings and Abilities, such different Skill and Opportunities of Inquiry; but the Unity of Faith is secured by an Agreement in all the fundamental Articles of Religion, though a little varied in some nicer Speculations; which are like the different Features in Mens Faces, which distinguish them from one another, but do not alter the human Shape: And this is the Difference between the Disputes which divide Papists and Protestants, and the Disputes of Protestants among themselves: The first subvert the Foundations of Christian Faith and Worship, and therefore these Differences can never be accommodated and reconciled; they will not part with their Errors, and we must not embrace them, if we love our Souls;

for as dear a thing as Peace is, we must not part with Truth for Peace. But now the Disputes among all that are allowed to be Protestants, whatever Mistakes there may be on any side, do not overthrow any necessary Article of the Christian Faith; and therefore the Unity of the Faith may be secured amidst all these Disputes. Some of these Disputes are only inconvenient Modes of Speaking, and the Difference is only in Words, when both Parties really mean the same thing; which, I believe, if all Heat and Passion were laid aside, would in a great measure appear to be the true State of that Protestant Controversy about Justification by Faith alone. Others are mere philosophical Disputes, in which the Christian Faith is not peculiarly concerned, for they have been, and are disputed in all Religions; such as the Controversy about God's eternal Decrees, and the Power and Efficacy of Nature and Grace; which is only a reviving of that old philosophical Dispute about Necessity and Fate, and God's Concourse with second Causes to produce their Effects. And thus it is in some other Cases. Now methinks such Disputes as these, which do not properly belong to the Christian Faith; should not divide the Christian Church: Let Men dispute about them as Philosophers; but, as Christians, let it suffice them to believe what Christ and his Apostles have plainly taught

us; that is enough to carry us to Heaven; and methinks it should be enough to make us agree in the Way thither.

As to explain this more particularly, but very briefly: There is no good Protestant but will confess, That we are justified only by the Merits of Christ's Death and Sacrifice, as the only Expiation and Atonement for our Sins. That no Works of Righteousness which we can do, can make Satisfaction to God for our Sins, nor merit eternal Life, which is the Gift of God. That Christ is our only Saviour, and that He is the Saviour only of his Body or Church. That we are incorporated into the Body of Christ, and put into a State of Justification, by Faith and the Christian Sacraments. That no impenitent unreformed Sinner, though he do profess to believe in Christ, and be baptized, shall be saved by Him; and therefore though Repentance and a holy Life do not merit the Pardon of Sin, nor eternal Rewards, yet they are necessarily required in all those who shall be forgiven and saved by Christ. This, I say, all good Protestants agree in, and all this is plainly taught in Scripture; and whoever believes this, and practises accordingly, shall certainly be saved: And what Need is there then of reducing all this into artificial Schemes, wherein Mens Fancies and Conceits differ? What Necessity is there of disputing what the Office of Faith,
or

or what the Efficacy of Works is in our Justification, when we all agree that we are saved only by the Mercy of God and the Merits of Christ, through Faith in his Blood, and the Exercise of Repentance and a holy Life? To understand the Reason and Order of Things, conduces much to the Beauty and Perfection of Christian Knowledge; but Men may be saved, and the Peace of the Church better secured, without such particular Determinations.

Thus all good Protestants agree, that all God's Works are known to him from the Foundation of the World: That Christ is *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*: That God knows who are his, and always did so: That we are predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved: That we are predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will, Ephes. i. 5, 6, 11. That when God comes to judge the World, he will appear infinitely just, and good, and merciful: That bad men shall have no Reason to complain of God, and that good Men shall have nothing to arrogate to themselves. This secures the Glory of God; of his Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, Power, and Sovereignty; and what Need is there to inquire

quire any farther into the divine Decrees, than the Scripture has revealed; in the particular Explication of which, when Men follow their own Fancies, they vastly differ from each other, to the great Disturbance of the Peace of the Church? We are assured by plain Testimonies of Scripture, That God desires not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should return and live: That our Destruction is of ourselves: That all the Good we do, is wholly owing to the Grace of God, *who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*: That all the Evil we do, is owing to ourselves: That *every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed; then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*. This we all agree in, and this attributes the Glory of all the Good we do, to God; and the Shame of all the Evil we do, to ourselves; this encourages us to do good, in a confident Assurance of the divine Grace; and teaches bad Men, that they must not think to excuse their Wickedness by charging it on God: And this is all that is necessary for us to know, because it is all that is needful to the Purposes of Religion and a holy Life.

But when Men frame this into philosophical Hypotheses, they then divide as far from each other as *East* and *West*; and all the Attempts of reconciling them is vain and fruitless,

fruitless, for there is no Medium to unite in. The only Way to Peace, is to silence all these Disputes, as Matters which Mankind will never agree about, and wherein Religion is no more concerned, than the Government of Kingdoms or States; and on which the Salvation of our Souls no more depends, than the Conduct of our secular Affairs, or the Preservation of this mortal Life: For the Dispute about Decrees, Predestination, God's Power over our Wills, how God and Creatures produce the same Effect; what belongs to God, and what belongs to the Creature in every Action, *since in him we live and move*; concerns every thing else as well as Religion; and yet in all other Cases, Men let Philosophers dispute these Points, and quietly go about their Business, and do what is fit to be done, as if there were no Controversy about these Matters; and I cannot imagine why they should not do so in Religion too: Believe what is plainly taught, and do what is commanded; use the greatest Wisdom and our utmost Diligence in doing good, and depend upon the Succours of the divine Grace, and leave these Disputes to be decided at the Day of Judgment, and that will decide them all. By this means I am sure most of the Disputes among Protestants, which have given the greatest Disturbance to the Church, would be for ever silenced, and the Christian Religion
would

would not be clogged, nor reproached with such philosophical Controversies.

2dly, The Unity of Communion : And that consists in our worshiping God together : when we resort to the same Church to offer up our united Prayers and Thanksgivings to God, and to partake of that holy Supper which is the Sacrament and Symbol of our Union to Christ and to each other : And this indeed is true Church Unity ; and it is greatly to be lamented, that Men who profess the same Faith, and agree in all the Essentials of Worship, should divide Communion, and refuse to pray together, and to feast at the same holy Table of our Lord. We cannot indeed communicate with the Church of *Rome*, because they have corrupted the very Essentials of Christian Worship. Most Men do not understand their Prayers, and therefore cannot join in Prayer with them : They worship Images and Pictures, which is expressly forbidden by the second Commandment. Instead of praying to God in the Name of our only Mediator and Advocate Jesus Christ, they have joined other Intercessors with him ; pray to Saints and Angels, and the Virgin *Mary*, to pray for them, and help them. They worship the Host, which we believe to be nothing but Bread and Wine as to the Substance, and therefore no Object of Worship ; and turn the sacramental Feast of Christ's Body and Blood into a propitiatory
Sacrifice

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Sacrifice for the Living and the Dead. Such a Worship as this we dare not join in, because it is sinful and idolatrous. But the Case is quite different among Protestants; they pray to the same God, in the only Name of the same Lord Jesus Christ; put up the same Petitions, offer the same Thanksgivings and Praises, observe the same divine Institutions, without any essential Change and Alteration, and yet cannot worship God together; as if it were an impious Thing to put up the same Prayers, and to offer the same Praises to God in a pious, and grave, and well-composed Form of Words, which others do, it may be not so well and decently, in their conceived Prayers; as if the Devotion of the Communicant in receiving so inestimable a Blessing as the sacramental Body and Blood of Christ upon his Knees, were a Profanation of that holy Feast; as if a white linen Garment, which never underwent any religious Conjurations, and is used only as a decent Habit, without any Opinion of its Virtue or Sanctity, were a just Reason to drive Men out of the Church, from the Christian Communion of Prayers and Sacraments. These would be surprising Stories to any Christians in the World, who had never heard before of such Disputes among us.

Pray give me leave to speak my Mind freely upon this Occasion. Upon the best and most impartial Inquiries and Observations I
can

can make, I do in my Conscience believe the Church of *England* to be the most apostolical and best reformed Church in the World: I see no Reason, from the Nature of Things, to make any material Alterations in her Doctrine or Worship; and therefore, I confess, it has given me very just Resentments, to hear our Church charged with such unjust Imputations of Popery, Superstition, Idolatry, Will-worship, and what not; and to see a blind and furious Zeal ready to raze up the very Foundations of it. It has often grieved me, to see such a Church as this rent and torn by Schisms, which a Man of ordinary Prudence might easily foresee would give great Advantage to the common Enemy of the Protestant Faith. This, and the Care of Mens Souls, and of their temporal Fortunes too, moved several Divines of this Church, when the Government thought fit to reinforce the Laws of Uniformity, to examine and answer all the Arguments of our dissenting Brethren; which they performed with that good Temper, with that Persuasiveness and Strength of Argument, as will be a Vindication of our Church to future Ages; and I wish it may, upon second Thoughts, have yet a better Effect upon those, who were not then persuaded: And this, I suppose, will not be called Persecution, much less can the many kind Offices they did in keeping off eccle-

ecclesiastical Censures, be called a Persecution.

And yet, after all, when it is so apparent, that Prejudices are grown as obstinate as they are unreasonable; when not the Reason of the Thing, but the Weakness of some, and the ill Designs of others, require some Compliance and Condescension; we have Reason to hope, that the Church of *England*, which at the Beginning of the Reformation took such prudent Care not to offend the Papist, by going farther from them than was necessary, will, whenever it is likely to do good, condescend a great deal farther than it is necessary to reform, to meet the Dissenter: For while the external Decency, Gravity, and Solemnity of Worship is secured, no wise and good Man will think much to change a changeable Ceremony, when it will heal the Breaches and Divisions of the Church: And let us heartily pray to God, that there may be this good and peaceable Disposition of Mind in all Conformists and Non-conformists, towards a happy Reunion; and all considering Men will think it time to lay aside such little Disputes, when it is not merely the Church of *England*, nor any particular Sect of Protestants, whose Ruin is aimed at, but the whole Protestant Faith.

3dly, Another kind of Unity is Love and Charity, and a mutual Forbearance. This I confess is a very difficult Thing, when the
Dispute

Dispute runs so high as to divide Christian Communion; for it seems in effect to declare Men to be Heathens and Publicans, when we refuse to worship God with them: and few Men can bear this, when so dear an Interest is concerned, as the Salvation of their Souls. And the Truth is, that Forbearance *St. Paul* so often mentions, was to preserve Men of different Attainments, and different Apprehensions, in the Unity of the Church, not to countenance their Schisms and Separations.

But yet, since we are fallen into such unhappy Circumstances, that a great many Men whom we have reason to hope are in other respects very good Christians, and such as our common Saviour will receive with all their Infirmities, are involved in a Schism, let us still treat them as Christian Brethren; pay all that Kindness and Respect to them, which is due to the Members of Christ, to the Children of the same Father, and the Heirs of the same Promises.

The good Order and Government, and the wholesome Laws and Constitutions of a Church, must not be presently sacrificed to the Scruples of every good, but it may be ignorant and indiscreet Christian; but yet in our Treatment of them, we must consider, whether we have not reason to think that Christ will own them with all their Faults; and if we have reason to believe, that Christ

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will own them, we ought also to own them, and pay such Kindness to them as is due to all sincere Christians, though under some Mistakes.

Now I am very confident, after all the Heats that have been between the Church of *England* and Dissenters, neither of them will damn each other upon account of such Differences as are between them: No Church of *England-man* will say, That to pray extempore, to baptize without the Sign of the Cross, to officiate without a Surplice, to receive the Sacrament sitting, are damning Sins; and I believe there are very few, if any of our Dissenters, that will say, that the contrary Practice is damning; and then there may be good Christians on both sides; and those who are so, ought to love one another as Members of the same Body of Christ, though divided in their external Communion by some unhappy Differences.

Schism, indeed we do say, is a damning Sin; but there may be Divisions where there is not always the Guilt and Formality of Schism: And we hope this is the Case of all good Men, who separate from the Church through some invincible Prejudices and Prepossessions.

This shews what great Reason we have to love one another, notwithstanding such dividing Disputes; but if we would practise this true Christian Charity, we must take care,

that these Differences do not grow up into personal Hatreds and Animosities. Mens Opinions and Practices may differ, and while they dispute fairly, they may be Friends still ; but when Self-love, Honour, Reputation, and Interest, is engaged in the Quarrel, this makes the Enmity mortal, and they must ruin one another, though they both fall together. This I am sure is not the Zeal which descends from above, which is pure and peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated.

2. The Peace of the Church signifies its Preservation from the Oppression and Persecution of its Enemies: For the Church never wants Enemies, though their Power be not always equal ; and this, I presume, I need not persuade you to pray for, for you are all sensible what an Advantage this is. There is none of you would choose Racks and Tortures, a Gibbet, or a Stake, these are grievous Things to Flesh and Blood, the very Thoughts of which make us tremble ; though immortal Life, and the Joys and Pleasures of God's Presence, are an abundant Recompence for the Loss of this present Life, and all the Sufferings of this World ; yet it is a very difficult Tryal, even to the best Men, who when they see it a coming, cannot but pray with the Importunity of an Agony, as our Saviour did, *Lord let this cup pass from me.* Though good Men prefer their

future Hopes before all present Things, yet their Life, their Ease, their Liberties, their Estates, are valuable Things too; and all Men would be glad to get to Heaven without meeting with such a Storm by the Way.

Especially if it be such a Storm as threatens the very Ruin of the Church, and of the true Religion, to subvert the Faith of many professed Christians, to entail Ignorance, Infidelity, or monstrous Errors on our Posterity; in such a Case, the Love of our Religion, of our Country, of our Posterity, will make us raise our Hearts and our Voices to Heaven, in our fervent and passionate Prayers *for the peace of Jerusalem*. And if we do heartily *pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, methinks we should not sacrifice our Religion to private Animosities: God forbid, were it in my Power, and had I never so little Kindness for Dissenters, that I should ever embrace any Proposals which would ruin all the Dissenters in *England*, and the Protestant Religion into the Bargain; and I doubt they are no Protestant Dissenters who would be contented to ruin the Church of *England*, though they introduce Popery, and set up the *Church of Rome* in its stead. Thus I have shewn you, what that Peace is, which we must pray for; and I need not add many Words in the second Place, to shew you, how necessary Prayer is to obtain these Blessings; for not to insist now on those common Topics, of the Necessity of Prayer in
gene-

general, and its Power and Efficacy to obtain our Requests of God; I shall desire you only to consider, that this Peace is such a Blessing as none but God can bestow, and therefore we ought to pray for it.

1. As for Unity and Peace among ourselves, this *St. Paul* expressly prays for, *Rom. xv. 5, 6. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:* For it is God that maketh Men to be of a Mind. Whoever considers the unruly Passions of Men, their different Capacities and Understandings, and different Interests, will not wonder that the best Arguments, and the most obliging Arts, do not always prevail; but God can still our Passions, enlighten our Minds, over-rule our Interests, remove our Prejudices, and unite and reconcile the most distant Persons: And not to take notice now of that Power he has over our Wills, and his immediate Applications to our Minds and Spirits, he many times effects this by some external and visible Providences. The Gaol and the Stake presently reconciled the Differences between those two excellent Bishops and Martyrs, *Ridley* and *Hooper*, who before disputed fiercely about some Ceremonies, as we have done; and I pray God grant us so much Christian Prudence and

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Temper,

22 *The Nature and Means*

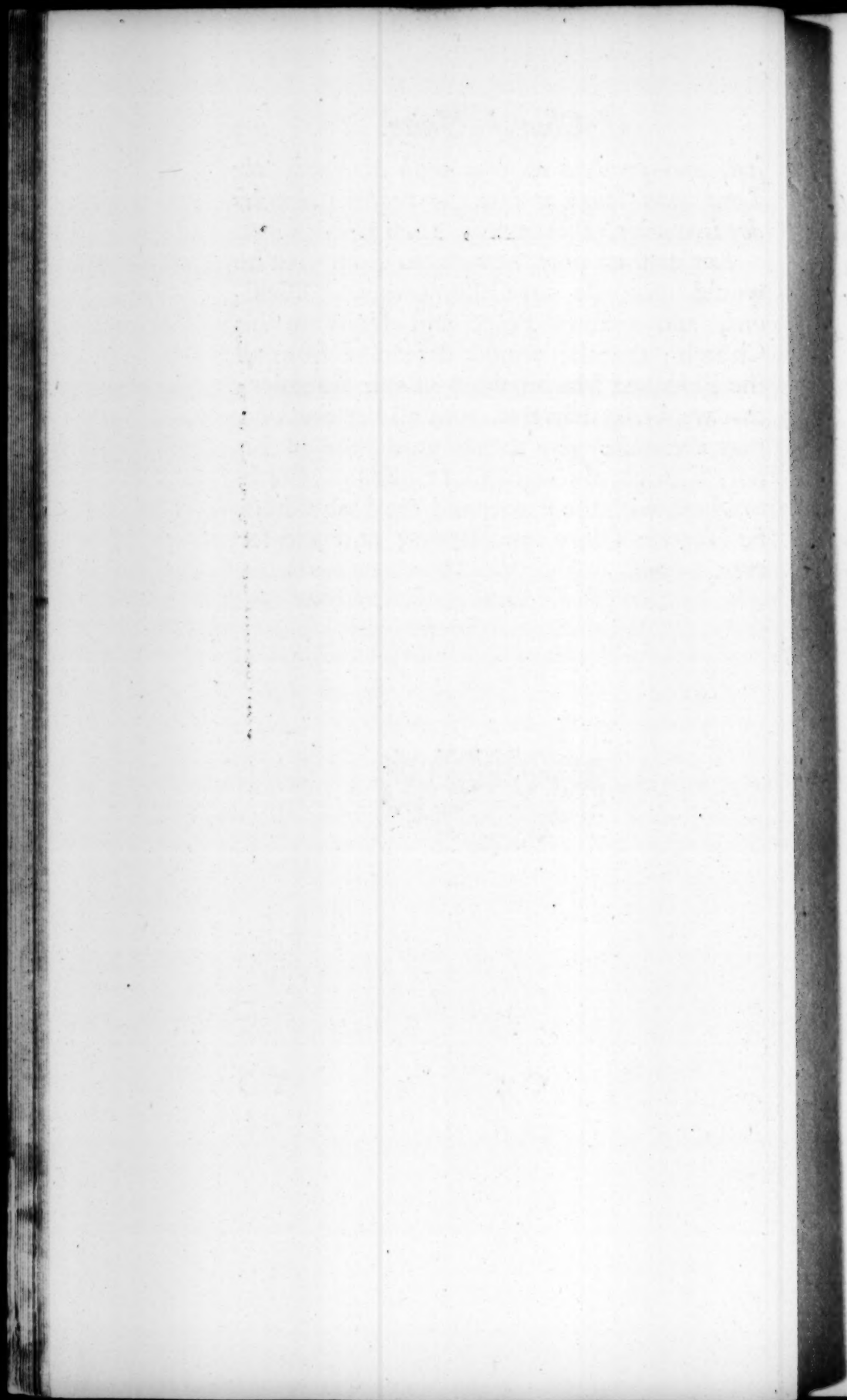
Temper, that we may not need such Means to reconcile us; and we have great Reason to hope this, since the divine Providence has in a great measure already removed the Prejudices on both sides, and convinced us, that we are not at such a Distance from each other as our Enemies would have us, and as it may be, we thought ourselves to be. Dissenters, I hope, are by this time very well satisfied, that the Church of *England* has no Inclination to *Popery*; and we have reason to acknowledge, that the Body of Dissenters (for some private Intriguers on either side do not deserve our Notice, nor to be thought on either side) have not such an irreconcilable Hatred to the Church of *England*, as to sacrifice her to a *Popish* Interest; and this bids fair for a good Understanding between us; and let us pray to God to continue and perfect it.

2. As for the Preservation of the Church from the Oppression and Persecution of her Enemies, this is God's Care too; and many times nothing but an all-seeing, vigilant and omnipotent Providence can secure her, Many times their Designs are laid deep and low, full of Intrigue and Artifice, unknown to all Men but themselves, as it was in the Gunpowder Treason, when our King, and Nobles, and Senators, were designed as a rich Sacrifice to a furious and antichristian Zeal; but when *the wicked plotteth against the just,*

just, and gnasheth on him with his teeth, the Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming, Psal. xxxvii. 12, 13.

Let us then pray heartily to God, that he would reconcile our Differences and Divisions, and restore Peace and Unity to his Church; that he would defend us from all the Plots and Machinations of our Enemies; that we, being delivered from all Persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto him in his holy Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever. *Amen.*







To his much esteemed Friends, the
Church-wardens and Parishioners of
*St. Lawrence Jewry, and St. Mary
Magdalen Milk-street.*

Gentlemen,

THough I had no Intention to make this
Sermon public, yet I could not with any
Modesty deny your Request, when you had paid
so great a Regard to the Counsel given you in it.
I heartily congratulate your happy Agreement in
the Choice of so excellent a Person to succeed
the not to be forgotten Dr. Calamy, who, I
doubt not, will deserve all that Honour and
Kindness, which it is so natural to you to shew
to your Ministers. I here present you with the
Sermon, as it was preached, excepting some
few things at the beginning, which were left
out in speaking, to shorten it, as much as I
could, without injuring the Sense. I am sen-
sible the Character falls very short of what
our deceased Friend deserved; but it is every
Word true, and I thought, had been as inof-
fensive too as it is true; and so I believe it will
appear to wise and considering Men, and others
may judge as they please. If it will contribute
any

*any thing to make both Ministers and People
more faithful in the Discharge of their several
Duties, I have what I aimed at, both in
preaching and printing it, especially if you
please to accept of it as a Testimony of the
sincere Respects of*

GENTLEMEN,

Your very Humble Servant,

WILLIAM SHERLOCK.

S E R.

S E R M O N II.

Preached at the Funeral of the Reverend *Benjamin Calamy, D.D.* and late Minister of *St. Lawrence-Jewry, London, Jan. 7, 1684.*

MATT. XXIV. 45, 46.

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

IN this and the foregoing Chapter, our Saviour acquaints his Disciples with the Signs and Prognostics of his Coming; which plainly have a double Aspect, both upon his coming to destroy *Jerusalem*, and upon his coming to judge the World: But the Application he makes of it is of universal Use; *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour*

28 *The faithful and wise Servant.*

hour your Lord doth come, ver. 42. which is excellent Advice, in what Sense soever we understand the coming of our Lord; for the coming of our Lord signifies his coming to take account of us; and whether we apply this to the Hour of our Death, or to the last Day of Judgment, still it concerns us to watch; that is, to be always diligent and careful in doing our Duty, and discharging that Trust which is committed to us, that whenever our Lord comes, we may give up our Accounts with Joy.

The Words I have now read to you, concern the Apostles of Christ, and their Successors, the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, who are as much obliged to this Watchfulness as any other sort of Persons, because as they have a greater Trust, so they have a greater Account to give. This we learn from *Luke* xii. 42, 43. where our Saviour having given that general Advice to all his Disciples, to watch for the coming of their Lord, *St. Peter* particularly inquires, how far he and the rest of the Apostles were concerned in it: *Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?* ver. 41. To which our Saviour answers, *Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler of his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.* Wherein our Saviour does particularly apply that general Advice to his Apostles
and

and their Successors, his Servants, Stewards, and Ministers of the Gospel : And, indeed, those particular Expressions which are here used, do sufficiently acquaint us, to whom this Advice belongs.

We need not question, who is here meant by *the Lord*, which is the peculiar Title of Christ in the *New Testament* ; and it is as evident, what this Household is, which is the Church of Christ, *The house and temple of the living God^a ; the household of faith^b, the household of God^c*. And Christ is said to be faithful as a Son, or Lord, *over his own house, whose are we, if we hold fast the confidence^d, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end*, in distinction from *Moses*, who was faithful as a Servant.

The Rulers of the Household, or the Stewards in *St. Luke*, are the Apostles, Bishops, Presbyters, who are the Governors of the Church, *ἐπισκοποι*, the overseers^e, the ministers of Christ, the stewards of the mysteries of God^f. The meat, which they are to give in season, is the Word of Life, which, with respect to the different Degrees and Perfection of Knowledge, is compared to milk^g, and to strong meat^h ; and therefore they are commanded to *feed the flock, to preach the word ; to be instant in season, out of season ; to reprove,*

^a 1 Cor. iii. 16. ^b Gal. vi. 10. ^c 2 Cor. 6. 16. ^d Heb. iii. 5, 6. ^e Acts xx. 28. ^f 1 Cor. iv. 1. ^g 1 Cor. iii. 2. ^h Heb. v. 12, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

rebuke,

30 *The faithful and wise Servant.*

rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine¹.

This is sufficient to shew you, that my Text does principally concern the Bishops and Ministers of the Church, who are in an eminent manner the Servants of Christ in the Instruction and Government of his Church, which is his House; and in speaking to these Words, I shall observe this following Method.

- I. Consider the Duty of Gospel-Bishops and Pastors, which is to feed, and to govern the Household of Christ.
- II. The Qualifications of Gospel-Ministers, which are Faithfulness and Prudence, *A faithful and wise Servant.*
- III. The great Rewards of such Men, *Blessed is that Servant.*

I. The Duty of Gospel-Ministers, whether Bishops or others, and that consists of two Parts. 1. To feed. 2. To govern the Household or Church of Christ. They are appointed *rulers of his household, to give them meat in due season.*

1. To feed the Flock of Christ². This Command Christ gave to Peter³, and repeated it three times; *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? then feed my lambs, feed my sheep¹.* Now to feed, signifies to

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 2. ² Acts xx. 28. ³ John xxi. 15, 16, 17.

A Funeral Sermon. 31

instruct Men in the Knowledge of Christ, for Knowledge is the proper Food and Nourishment of the Soul, by which it grows in spiritual Wisdom, and all Virtue and Goodness; and is as necessary to our spiritual Life, as natural Food is to the Life of our Bodies^m. *This is Life eternal, saith our Saviour, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sentⁿ.*

For this Reason our Saviour appointed Stewards and Dispensers of the Mysteries of his Kingdom, whose whole Business it should be to study the divine Will themselves, and to instruct others. For this is a Knowledge which must be taught; Nature may instruct us in the Being of a God, and the Differences between Good and Evil, and the plain Rules of Morality; but the Mysteries of the Kingdom, the whole Oeconomy of Man's Salvation by Jesus Christ, is to be known only by Revelation. Christ came down from Heaven to reveal this to us, and he instructed his Apostles, and his Apostles by their Preaching and Writings instructed the Church, and have left us a standing Rule of Faith and Manners; but yet it is necessary, that there should be some Men peculiarly devoted to the Service of Religion, the Study of the Scriptures, and the Work of the Ministry, to instruct and teach those who have neither Leisure nor Opportunities for Inquiry, nor

^m 1 Pet. ii. 2.

ⁿ John xvii. 3.

Capacity to learn without a Guide, which is the Case of the Generality of Christians; especially since Religion has been clogged with such infinite Disputes, and there has been so much Art used to make the plainest Truths difficult, obscure, and uncertain, to corrupt the Christian Faith, and to make it comply with Mens sensual Lusts, or secular Interests. A Guide and Instructor is absolutely necessary, when there are so many Turnings and Labyrinths, wherein Men may lose themselves, and their Way to Heaven.

But though there were no Disputes in Religion, no Difficulty in understanding it, though all Men were agreed about the Way to Heaven, though the meanest Christian understood the Mysteries of Christianity as well as the greatest Divine, yet there would be constant need of a Spiritual Guide, while Men are apt to be unmindful of their Duty, and careless in the Practice of it. The Work of an Evangelical Pastor is not merely to instruct the Ignorant, but to exhort, to reprove, to admonish, to watch over the Lives and Manners of Christians, to make seasonable Applications to their Consciences, to administer Comfort to afflicted Spirits, to excite and quicken the Slothful, and to encourage the Fearful and Timorous, and to assist and direct Men in their spiritual Warfare, how to obtain a glorious Victory over the World and the Flesh. This is to feed the Flock of Christ,
and

and to give them Meat in due Season, to instruct them in those things of which they are ignorant, and to put them in mind of those things which they already know, that their Faith may be turned into a Principle of Life and Action, and this heavenly Food may be digested into Blood and Spirits, to the edifying of the Body of Christ in all Christian Graces and Virtues.

2. Another Part of the Ministerial Office consists in Acts of Discipline and Government ; Christ has made these Ministers and Servants, *rulers over his household*°. No Society can be preserved, without Order and Government, which is as absolutely necessary in the Church, as in the State. Christ is the *Head of the Church, the Husband, the Shepherd, the Lord*, which are all Names of Authority and Power ; and the Church is his *Body, his Spouse, his Flock, his Household, and Family*, which are Names of Subjection, and denote a regular and orderly Society ; but Christ has now left this World, and does not visibly appear among us, to direct and govern the Affairs of his Church ; he is ascended into Heaven, where he sits at the Right-hand of God, and exerciseth an invisible Power and Providence for the Defence and Preservation of his Church on Earth : He governs us by his Laws, and by his Spirit, and by his Ministers : For *when he ascended on high, he*

° Eph. v. 23. John x. 14.

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led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets; and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ^p.

When our Saviour was risen from the dead, he tells his Disciples, *All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world^q.* This is their Commission, to preach the Gospel, and to govern his Church; which was not merely a personal Commission to the Apostles, but extends to all their Successors, as appears from Christ's Promise to be with them in the Discharge of this Ministerial Authority to the End of the World. Thus St. John acquaints us, that Christ after his Resurrection appeared to his Apostles, when they were met together, and said unto them, *Peace be unto you, as my Father hath sent me, so send I you. And as he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins*

^p Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12, 13. ^q Mat. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained^r. This invested them with Authority; but then the actual Communication of Power, which, especially at that time, was necessary to the Discharge of their Office, was reserved for the Descent of the Holy Ghost; and therefore our Saviour commanded them, *Not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father*; that is, the Gift of the Holy Ghost. For, says he, *Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth*^s.

And accordingly we find, that during the Time of the Apostles, the Supreme Authority of the Church was in their Hands, which they committed to their Successors, and has ever since been exercised by Christian Bishops and Presbyters, with regard to their different Order and Power. But what is this Power which Christ hath given to his Ministers? They have no Rods, nor Axes, as secular Princes have, to compel Men to the Faith of Christ, and to force their Obedience. No; this is contrary to the Genius and Spirit of Christianity. If Men will be Infidels, if they will be wicked, we cannot help it: *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are*

^r John xx. 21, 22, 23.

^s Acts i. 4, 8, 9.

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*not carnal, such as earthly Princes use, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong-holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*¹.

Our Saviour, in my Text, acquaints us what this Power and Authority is ; he *makes them rulers over his household, to give them meat in due season.* This is the Authority Christ hath given to his Ministers, to instruct, to exhort, to advise, to admonish, to reprove, and that with *sharpness* too, when there is occasion for it, *according to the power which the Lord hath given to edification, and not to destruction*^u ; as St. Paul speaks.

But what Authority is this ? May not every Christian do the same ? Is it not the Duty of us all, as we are able, to instruct, exhort, reprove one another ? Yes, it is ; and I would to God it were more generally practised ; but yet every private Christian cannot do this with the Authority of a Bishop, or a Gospel-Minister : The Instructions and Exhortations of private Christians, are Acts of Friendship and Charity ; and the Obligation to it, is that mutual Concernment and Sympathy which the Members of the same Body ought to have for each other : In Gospel-Ministers it is an Act of Authority, like the Censures of a Father, a Magistrate, or a Judge.

¹ 2 Cor. x. 3, 4, 5.

^u 2 Cor. xiii. 10.

We do not pretend, indeed, as St. Paul speaks, to *have dominion over your Faith*^w, to exercise a kind of Sovereign Authority, to oblige you to believe any thing merely because we say it; but yet our Authority is such, that if in the Exercise of our Office we explain the Articles of Faith and Rules of Life to you, it lays an indispensable Obligation upon you, carefully to examine what we say, and not to reject it, without plain and manifest Evidence, that what we teach you is not agreeable to the Will of God revealed in the Scriptures. For when we come in the Name and Authority of Christ, that Man who rejects our Message, without being sure that we exceed our Commission, rejects the Authority by which we act; and *he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God*. It is our Work and our Commission to instruct you, and it is your Duty to be instructed; and whoever shall wantonly reject any Doctrines which do not suit with his Humour and Interest, or oppose some popular Mistakes and Prejudices against the Instructions of his Guide, or turn away his Ear from Instruction, and heap to himself Teachers, having itching Ears, such a Man must give a severe Account of this Neglect and Contempt to the great Bishop and Shepherd of Souls. While we are careful to discharge our Office in pursuance of that Trust our Great Master

^w 2 Cor. i. 24.

38 *The faithful and wise Servant.*

hath committed to us, what our Saviour tells his Apostles is true of the meanest of us all: *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me* *.

The like may be said of the Exhortations, and Counsels, and Directions, and Reproofs, of our Spiritual Guides; they carry great Authority with them; they are not like the private Admonitions of our Friends, who exhort and reprove out of Kindness, and their particular Concernment for us: To reject such Counsels as these, does mightily aggravate our Sin and our Condemnation, as every thing does, which makes our Sin more wilful and obstinate; but to reject the Counsels and Reproofs of our Guide, is a new Act of Disobedience to that Authority which Christ has set in his Church. Whether you will hear, or whether you will obey, we must exhort, reprove, advise; and wo be to us, if we do not, and wo be to those who will not hear, who will not obey. Our Great Master looks upon this as a Contempt of his own Authority, and this is all the Authority we have. We cannot force you to obey our Counsels or Reproofs, but ours and your Master will severely punish you, if you do not.

In a Word, the Instructions, Reproofs, and Censures of Christ's Ministers, carry such Authority with them, that they can receive

* Luke x. 16.

into, or shut out of, the Communion of the Church, which is the only visible State of Salvation. Remission of Sins, and eternal Life, is ordinarily to be had only in the visible Communion of the Church, and therefore the Power of Receiving into the Church by Baptism, and of Casting out of the Church by Excommunication, which is the only Authority Christ hath given to these Rulers of his Household, to receive in, and cast out of, his Family, is called a Power of remitting or retaining Sins, because the Forgiveness of Sins is to be had only in the Communion of the Church; and no Man belongs to the invisible Church, who does not live in Communion with the visible Church, when it may be had.

The Authority of Christ's Ministers is to feed those who are of his Household, to give them their Meat in due Season, and to judge who shall belong to this Household, who shall be received in, or cast out of, Christ's Family: This is the highest Act of Church-Authority on Earth, and the only Sanction of all our Instructions, Counsels, and Re-proofs; and therefore this Authority is not intrusted with every Gospel-Minister, but is committed to the chief Governors of the Church, the Bishops, who succeed into the ordinary Apostolical Power.

II. Let us now consider the due Qualifications which are required in Gospel-Ministers,

40 *The faithful and wise Servant.*

and they are two : Faithfulness and Prudence, *Who is that faithful and wise servant ?*

First, Faithfulness : Now Faithfulness in a Servant consists in being true to his Trust ; and when this is applied to Preaching the Gospel, it signifies, that he is extremely careful to publish the whole Mind and Will of God ; which as it concerns us in this Age, includes these following Rules :

1. To be careful to acquaint ourselves with the Will of God, that we may be *Scribes which are instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, who are like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old*^y. The Priests Lips must preserve Knowledge, but we must first have it, before we can teach it others ; and since none of us now pretend to immediate Inspirations, this is a Work of Difficulty and Labour, and requires as much Faithfulness in our Studies, as in the Pulpit. It is no Argument of Faithfulness, whatever it may be of Diligence, to run like *Abimaaz*^z, without Tidings, to vent some crude and indigested Thoughts for the Oracles of God.

2. Faithfulness requires us to preach nothing for the Will of God, but what we are sure to be so ; to deliver no Message, but what we have received in Commission ; not to indulge our own private Conjectures and Fancies ; nor think to mend and sublimiate

^y Matt. xiii. 52.

^z 2 Sam. xviii. 22.

Religion by philosophical Speculations, but to content ourselves with the Simplicity of the Gospel, *to preach Christ Jesus, and him crucified.* Nothing has done greater Mischief to Religion, than when the very Teachers of it have been ambitious to be wise above what is written. All the Articles of the Christian Faith, as distinguished from the Principles of Natural Religion, can be known only by Revelation; and therefore there is no Reasoning about them any farther, than to know what is revealed, and what is not revealed; for whatever is more than this, is so uncertain, and so useless, that it is not worth the knowing. Since we preach in the Name, and by the Authority of Christ, we ought not to instruct our People in any thing but what we have his Authority for, for this is to exceed our Commission. Other nice Speculations may entertain us in private Conversation; but when we preach in the Name of Christ, let us only preach his Gospel, and teach them to observe and do whatsoever he hath commanded us.

3. Faithfulness requires, that we preach the whole Will of God; that we instruct Men in all the Articles of the Christian Faith, especially where there is any apparent and present Danger of a Mistake; and that we teach them every Part of their Duty to God and Men, especially such Duties as they are most unwilling to learn, and most averse to Practice.

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Practice. This is an essential Part of Faithfulness, and requires no small Courage too.

There are no Times so bad, no Hearers so captious, but they will very well bear some general Commendations of Religion, or some common Topics about Virtue or Vice; which are of great Use too, especially in such a sceptical and unbelieving Age as this. But a faithful Discharge of our Ministry requires somewhat more; a particular Application to the Consciences of Men, according to their Wants and Necessities, not so much to consult what will please them, as what will do them good. It mightily concerns a Gospel-Minister, as far as he can, to maintain a fair Reputation in the World; but a good Name is nothing worth, when we can do no Good by it, when we cannot get or maintain a good Name without neglecting our Duty, or betraying the Souls of Men. I had a thousand times rather, that Men should reproach and revile me for instructing them in such Duties, as they cannot with Patience hear of, than that they should commend me for my Silence.

It is hard to live in any Age, wherein there are not some popular Errors, or some popular Vices to be corrected; and it is a very dangerous thing to meddle with any thing that is popular. But what is Danger to that Man, who is in a greater Danger by the neglect of his Duty? Shall any Man call himself a Minister of the Gospel, and a Servant
of

of Jesus Christ, and in such an Age, as we now live in, be ashamed or afraid to censure or confute the Errors of Popery or Fanaticism, or to reprove Schism and Faction, because they are very popular Vices? *Let a man so account of us, as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.* But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment^a: as St. Paul speaks. When we leave our several Flocks, it will be infinite Satisfaction to us, to be able to say, as St. Paul did to the *Asian* Bishops; *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you all the counsel of God*^b.

Secondly, Prudence is as necessary in a Gospel-Minister, as Faithfulness is: By Prudence I do not mean Cunning and Subtilty, artificial Insinuations and Addresses, which are more like the Arts of Seducers, than of Gospel-Ministers, *Who by good words, and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*^c. Prudence will not allow us in the Neglect of any Part of our Duty, whatever the Event be; but we must renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God^d.

^a 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2, 3. ^b Acts xx. 26, 27. ^c Rom. xvi. 18.
^d 2 Cor. iv. 2.

44 *The faithful and wise Servant.*

Wisdom and Prudence, as they are consistent with Faithfulness and Honesty in the Discharge of our Trust, can signify no more but this : To instruct, exhort, persuade, and perform all the Parts and Offices of a Gospel-Minister, in such a manner as may render our Instructions and Persuasions most effectual ; to take the most convenient Seasons, when Men are most apt to be wrought on ; to teach them such things as are of most present Use to them ; to use such Arguments as are most likely to prevail ; to avoid all unnecessary Provocations, when the Duty itself, which we are to teach them, is not the Matter of the Provocation ; for if Men will be provoked with hearing of their Duty, there is no help for that. Prudence never dispenses with any part of our Duty, but directs to the best way of doing it : A faithful Servant does what he is commanded, and a wise Servant does it in the most effectual manner.

III. The last Part of my Text concerns the great Reward of such faithful and wise Servants ; *Blessed is that servant.* What this Reward is, we are not here particularly told. All good Men, we know, shall be very blessed and happy in the other World, and we may reasonably presume, that Christ, who is the great Judge of the World, has reserved some peculiar Marks of Honour for his immediate Servants : This he plainly intimates to us, in that Distinction he makes
between

between the Reward of a Prophet, and of a righteous Man : *He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward : And he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward*.*

Our Reward in Heaven will bear some Proportion to the Nature of our Work, and to that Service we do for God in this World. Now we cannot do any more acceptable Service, than to serve God in the Gospel of his Son ; to use our utmost Endeavours to propagate Religion in the World, and to make other Men wise, and good, and happy. Our Saviour himself came into the World on this very Design, and was advanced to the Right-hand of Glory and Power, as a Reward of it ; and those who *are workers together with him*†, as St. Paul speaks, will receive some proportionable Reward also.

The faithful Discharge of this Duty is a Work of infinite Care and Difficulty, that it made an Apostle himself cry out, *Who is sufficient for these things*‡ ! It requires the Exercise of great Care, and great Prudence, and great Patience ; it is abundantly enough to employ our whole Time and Thoughts either in studying the Will of God, or in attending the public Ministries of Religion, or in private Addresses and Applications to Men who want our Advice and Counsel ; we must

* Matt. x. 41. † 2 Cor. vi. 1. ‡ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

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contentedly bear all the Affronts and Insults of bad Men, the Frowardness and Peevishness of many professed Christians, the Gainsayings and Contradictions of Sinners. We must go on and persevere in our Work, though our Persons and our Ministry be despised: *When we are reviled, we must bless: when persecuted, we must suffer: when defamed, we must intreat: yea, though we are made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things^h.* This is not very pleasing to Flesh and Blood, but the harder the Work is, the greater will our Reward be, if we be found faithful and wise Servants.

Nay, there is no Work does so ennoble the Mind as this, and qualify us for an excellent Reward. No Man can faithfully discharge this Work, but it must purge and refine his Mind, and set him vastly above this World, and the little Concernments of it: It gives us a more clear distinct comprehensive Knowledge of God and divine things, which is an angelical Perfection of the Mind and Understanding; and he must be a strange Man, who can be so constantly employed in the Contemplation of God, and the things which relate to another and a better Life, and not find his Soul ravished with those unseen and unspeakable Glories; who is so constantly employed in taking care of other Mens Souls, and takes no Care of his own; who is so

^h 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13:

frequent in his Devotions, as the very Nature of our Work exacts from us, and not live a most divine and heavenly Life : There are indeed some, who in the most divine Employment are no great Examples of such a divine Conversation ; but I fear they will not be found in the Number of these faithful and wise Servants. Whoever heartily applies himself to the Care of Souls, will in the first place take care of his own ; and the faithful Discharge of this Duty, will raise us so much above the ordinary Level and Attainments of Christians, as will prepare us for a greater Reward, and advance us to a more perfect State of Glory.

Nay, that immediate Relation we stand in to Christ, who is the Sovereign Lord and Judge of the World, if we approve ourselves faithful and wise Servants, will secure us of a more excellent Reward. The Church on Earth and the Church in Heaven, is but one Church, one Household, and Family ; and those whom he has made Rulers of his Household here, to whom he has committed the greatest Places of Trust and Dignity, need not fear being degraded in the other World, if they adorn their Office, and faithfully discharge their Trust here ; and therefore our Saviour tells his Apostles, *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon*

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*upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*¹: That is, that their Reward and Glory in the other World, should answer to that Place of Trust, and Power, and Dignity, which they had in the Church on Earth; and this Promise is no more peculiar to the Apostles, than their Office was.

In a Word, If we consider what the State of the other World is, and who is King there, that it is the blessed Jesus, our Great High-Priest, King of *Salem*, or the new *Jerusalem*, and Priest of the most High God, how mean and contemptible soever our Office is thought here, we need not doubt but the Scene will be mightily changed, when we come into that Kingdom where the King is a High-Priest.

Let this, then, beloved Brethren of the Clergy, be a mighty Encouragement to us to be very diligent and faithful in the Discharge of this great Trust; whatever Difficulties we meet with, whatever Scorns, Reproaches, or Sufferings, it is but expecting a while, and our Lord will come, and his Reward is with him; and *blest*, for ever blest, *is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.*

Yea blest, for ever blest, as my Text gives us reason to hope, is this our dear Brother, whose Remains lie here before us, who when his Lord came, was found thus doing. We may lament the Loss of so kind a Relation, so true a Friend, so faithful a Pastor,

¹ Matt. xix. 28.

and

and Fellow-labourer, according to the several Interests we had in him ; but he, blessed Soul, has fought a good Fight, and finished his Course, and kept the Faith, and is now gone to receive a Crown of Righteousness, a Crown of Immortality and Glory. He is now gone to that great Bishop and Shepherd of Souls, whose Flock he has so carefully and diligently fed, and whose wandering and straggling Sheep he has reduced into the Fold : To that kind Shepherd who laid down his Life for his Sheep, and therefore will not fail to reward those who have spent their Lives, and were ready to have sacrificed them too, for the Service of Souls.

When we speak of so great a Man, it is below his Character to mention such things as would be thought considerable Attainments in meaner Persons ; though indeed a truly great Man does nothing meanly. A great Mind gives a peculiar Grace and Decency to common Actions, as it was easy to observe in his very Mirth and freest Humours, that he never gave the Reins out of his Hands, but governed himself by the strictest Rules of Prudence and Religion.

But I shall confine myself to the Subject of my Text, and consider him only as *a faithful and wise Steward*, and therefore have very little to add ; for I doubt not, but you who knew him, especially you who have enjoyed the Benefit of his Ministry, and have lived

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50 *The faithful and wise Servant.*

under his Care and Conduct, have already applied what I have discoursed on this Argument, to your deceased Pastor; and would I have chosen any particular Man to have drawn the Character by, of a wise and faithful Steward, there are not many Men I should sooner have thought on, than Dr. *Calamy* to have been the Pattern.

That he did take care to give you Meat in due Season, I need not tell you, because you all know it. If Preaching in Season and out of Season, if public Instructions and private Applications, where they were needful or desired, be to feed the Flock of Christ, and to give Meat to his Household and Family; this he did, and that very faithfully and wisely too.

In the first place, he took care to inform himself, and to furnish his own Mind with all useful Knowledge; and his constant Preaching, though without any vain Affectation of Learning, which serves only to amuse, not to instruct, did sufficiently discover both his natural and acquired Abilities. He had a clear and distinct Apprehension of Things, an easy and manly Rhetoric, strong Sense conveyed to the Mind in familiar Words, good Reasons inspired with a decent Passion, which did not only teach, but move and transport the Hearers, and at the same time gave both Light and Heat: For indeed, he was a good Man, which is necessary to
make

make a good Preacher ; he had an inward vital Sense of Religion, and that animated his Discourses with the same divine Passions which he felt in himself.

He did not entertain his Hearers with School Subtilties, or a conjectural Divinity, with such thin and airy Speculations, as can neither be seen, nor felt, nor understood ; but his chief Care was to explain the great Articles of Faith, and Rules of Life, what we must believe, and how we must live, that we may be eternally happy. And he did, as a faithful Servant ought to do, as he declared a little before his death, that he never preached any thing, but what he himself firmly believed to be true.

I need not tell you what a troublesome World we have lived in for some years past, such critical Times as would try the Principles and Spirits of Men ; when a prevailing Faction threatened both Church and State, and the Fears of Popery were thought a sufficient Justification of the most illegal and irreligious Methods to keep it out ; when it was scandalous to speak a Word either for the King or the Church ; when cunning Men were silent, and those who affected Popularity swam with the Stream ; then this great and good Man durst reprove Schism and Faction, durst teach Men to conform to the Church, and to obey and honour the King ; durst vindicate the despised Church of *Eng-*

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land, and the hated Doctrine of Passive Obedience, though the one was thought to favour Popery, and the other to introduce Slavery; but he was above the powerful Charms of Names, and liked Truth never the worse, because it was miscalled. His pulic Sermons preached in those Days, and printed by public Authority, are lasting Proofs of this, and yet he was no Papist neither, but durst reprove the Errors of Popery, when some others, who made the greatest Noise and Outcry about it, grew wise and cautious. This was like a truly honest and faithful Servant, to oppose the growing Distempers of the Age, without any regard either to unjust Censures, or apparent Danger. And yet he did not needlessly provoke any Man; he gave no hard Words, but thought it severe enough to confute Mens Errors, without upbraiding or reproaching their Persons. His Conversation was courteous and affable to all Men, soft and easy, as his Principles were stubborn; he could yield any thing but the Truth, and bear with any thing but the Vices of Men. He would, indeed, have been the Wonder of his Age, had he not lived in such an Age, as, thanks be to God, can shew many such Wonders; and yet in such an Age as this he made an illustrious Figure; though he had his Equals, he had not many Superiors.

Thus

Thus he lived, and thus this good Man died ; for thus he was found doing when his Lord came. The first Symptoms of his Distemper seized him just before his last Sermon at *Whitehall*, but gave him so much Respite as to take his Leave of the World in an excellent Discourse of Immortality, which he speaks of with such a sensible Gust and Relish, as if his Soul had been then upon the Wing, and had some Foretaste of those Joys it was just a going to possess. And indeed, he encountered the Apprehensions of Death, like one who believed and hoped for Immortality ; he was neither over fond of living, nor afraid to die. He received the Supper of our Lord, professed his Communion with the Church of *England*, in which he had lived, and in which he now died ; and having recommended his Soul to God, he quietly expected how he would dispose of him.

But I must not forget to tell you, that he died like a true and faithful Pastor, with a tender Care and Affection for his Flock. When he imposed this unwelcome Office upon me, he told me, he did not desire any Praises of himself, but that I would give some good Advice to his People, who, said he, are indeed a very kind and loving People. And this was not the first nor the only Time I have heard him own, not only your kind Reception of him at first, but the repeated and renewed Expressions of your Affection,

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which did signally manifest itself in his late Sickness, and now accompanies him to the Grave. A Character, which to your Honour I speak it, you have now made good for several Successions, and which, I hope, you will never forfeit.

But what that good Counsel is, he would have me give you, he told me not; and therefore I can only guess at his Intentions in this. Were he now present to speak to you, I believe he could not give you better Counsel than he has already done; and therefore my Advice to you is,

1. To remember those Counsels and Exhortations which you have heard from your deceased Pastor. Though the Sower be removed, yet let that immortal Seed, that Word of Life which he has sown, live and fructify in your Hearts, and bring forth the blessed Fruits of Righteousness. He has shewed you the plain Way to Heaven, have a care you do not forget it, have a care you do not wander out of it. He has recommended the Communion of the Church of *England* to you. He has taught you to be loyal to your Prince, and to be true to your Religion; take care then, that neither your Religion destroy your Loyalty, nor your Loyalty corrupt your Religion: Remember, that beloved Person, whose Memory is dear and sacred to you, was neither a Rebel, Papist, nor a Fanatic.

2. Since

A Funeral Sermon. 55

2. Since you have lost your Guide, a faithful and a prudent Guide, and the Choice of a Successor is in yourselves, be very careful, as the Concernment of your Souls requires you should be, of your Choice. Consider what an Age we live in, which requires an experienced and skilful Pilot to steer a secure and steady Course. Have a care of dividing into Factions and Parties; let not mere private Interests or Friendships govern you; if it be possible, admit of no Competitions, much less of Pulpit-Combats, which do oftener occasion lasting and fatal Divisions, than end in a wise Choice. Remember what a Succession you have had of great and good Men in this Place; and let it be your Ambition still to equal and out-do it if you can.

And now I shall conclude with one Word to you, my Brethren of the Clergy. We have lost a faithful and diligent Labourer in God's Vineyard, in a Time when we could ill have spared him: Let us then, who still survive, double our Diligence, and express a greater Zeal and Concernment in the Defence of Religion, and in the Care of Souls. Let us remember, that we are all mortal, and how little Time we have to work in, we know not; but let us so improve the Remainder of our Days, that when our Lord comes, he may own us for

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faithful and wise Servants, and bestow on us a Crown of Righteousness and Immortality. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ : To whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be Honour, and Glory, and Power, now and for ever. *Amen.*



S E R M O N III.

Preached at *Whitehall*, before the
Queen, on the 17th of *June*, 1691.
Being the Fast-Day.

P S A L M lxxvii. 10, 11, 12.

*And I said, This is my infirmity; but
I will remember the years of the
right-hand of the most High.*

*I will remember the works of the Lord:
surely I will remember thy wonders
of old.*

*I will meditate also of all thy works,
and talk of thy doings.*



HE Psalmist, at the penning of
this Psalm, was oppressed with very
black and desponding Thoughts:
The State of the Church seems
to have been very calamitous, they had been
so long and so grievously afflicted, that he
began to question, whether God would ever
be merciful to them again: *Will the Lord
cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no
more?*

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more?*

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more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?

But in my Text he recollects himself, confesses his Wickedness and Sin in giving the least Entertainment to such unworthy Thoughts of God, as if he could forget his Promise and Covenant, which he had made to their Fathers *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; this is my Infirmary; want of Faith and Trust in God's Promises; And to cure this Diffidence, to revive his dying Hopes, and to confirm his Faith in God, he calls to mind those glorious Deliverances which God had wrought for his Church and his People *Israel* in former Ages: *I will remember the years of the right-hand of the most High*; those Days when God did so visibly deliver *Israel* with his own Right-hand; as it follows, ver. 14, 15. *Thou art the God that doest wonders; thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.* And Instances in those miraculous Deliverances in *Ægypt*, the Red Sea, and the Wilderness, as a Reason and Foundation of a firm Faith and Trust in God in all Ages; these are those Works of the Lord, and Wonders of old, which he will remember, which he will meditate and talk of, with which he will support his Spirit, whatever Dangers seem to threaten the final Ruin and Desolation of the Church; which is the
Argument

Argument of Psalm lxxx. 14, 15. *Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine, and the vineyard which thy right-hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest so strong for thyself.*

That God had made a Covenant with *Abraham*, and chose his Seed and Posterity for his peculiar People; that he had delivered them out of *Ægypt* by a mighty hand, and an outstretched Arm; that he had given them Passage through the Red Sea, and fed them in the Wilderness forty Years; that he had fought their Battles for them, and given them Possession of the Land of *Canaan*, as he had promised to their Fathers; that he had in all succeeding Ages protected them by a visible Providence, raised up Judges and Saviours to deliver them out of the Hands of their Enemies, when they cried to him; this was a sure Foundation of their Faith and Hope, that God would not utterly cast off his People, but though for their Sins he might deliver them into the Hands of their Enemies, yet when they repented of their evil Ways, and returned unto God, God also would return, and be merciful unto them.

And this is the wisest Course we can take, whatever Troubles we suffer, whatever we fear, whatever our Sins have deserved, whatever our Enemies threaten, *To remember the works of the Lord and his Wonders of old, to meditate*

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meditate of all his works, and to talk of his doings.

And this is what I at present intend, to make such Remarks on the Providence of God towards the *Jewish* Church, not omitting the Experience the Christian Church has had of the same kind and watchful Providence, as may be of present Use to us both, to direct us what we must do, and to give us a firm Hope and Trust in God's Mercy; for God is always the same under all the Dispensations of his Grace and Providence; and as the *Jewish* Church was a Type of the Christian; so God's Providence towards them, assures us, what we may expect in like Circumstances, or else the Scriptures of the Old Testament would be of very little Use to us now; whereas St. Paul tells us, *That these things happened to them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come*, 1 Cor. x. 11. But what Difference there is between their State and ours, and how far we are concerned in the Examples, I shall distinctly observe under the several Particulars, as there is Occasion for it:

I. First then I observe as St. Paul did, *That the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*, Rom. xi. 29. God having made a Covenant with *Abraham*, and chosen his Seed for his peculiar People, whatever their

their Provocations were, he would never wholly cast them off; he many times very severely punished them, delivered them into the Hands of their Enemies, who oppressed them, the *Aramites*, and *Moabites*, and *Ægyptians*, and *Assyrians*, and at last into the Hands of *Nebuchadnezzar*, who destroyed their City and Temple, and carried them captive into *Babylon*, where they continued seventy Years, and then they returned into their own Country, and rebuilt their Temple and City, and so continued till, in punishment of their great Sin in crucifying their Messias, and for their obstinate Infidelity, they were finally destroyed by the *Romans*, and dispersed into all Nations, and have never been a Nation since; that is, till Christ came, who was the promised Seed, in whom all the Nations of the World are blessed, as St. Paul proves, *Gal. iii. 16. To Abraham and his seed were the promises made: He saith not, unto seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.* I say, till Christ, who was the promised Seed, and typified by *Isaac*, came, the carnal Posterity of *Abraham*; descending from *Isaac* and *Jacob*, were the typical *Israel*, and God's peculiar People, and visible Church on Earth, and all this while God never wholly cast them off; but when Christ came, then the Promise was established to the spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, those who are the Children of *Abraham* by Faith in Christ,

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Christ, as the Apostle proves in the same Place; ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. and in several other Places: And this is the Answer, which the Apostle gives to that terrible Objection against Christ's being the Messias, and God's owning the Christian Church for his peculiar and elect People, as formerly he did the *Jews*; that then God's Promise to *Abraham* and his Seed fails: His Answer is, that the Promise to *Abraham* and his Seed, was meant of Christ and his spiritual Seed, those who are the Children of *Abraham* by Faith in Christ; as he proves at large in the 9th, 10th, and 11th Chapters to the *Romans*; though he gives another Answer to this too, that though the Promises do no longer belong to *Abraham's* carnal Seed, yet God so far remembers his Covenant with *Abraham* and his carnal Seed, that he has not wholly cast them off, but will in time engraft them into his Church again by Faith in Christ: *For out of Sion shall come the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.* But I cannot enlarge on this now.

To apply this then to the Times of the Gospel: We certainly learn from God's Care of the *Jewish* Church, that God will always preserve and protect the Christian Church, that the true Faith of Christ, and his true and sincere Worshipers shall never wholly fail in the World, as Christ promises, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church*: For God established an everlasting

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Covenant with *Abraham* and his Seed, that is, with Christ and the Christian Church, who are the true spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, to whom the Promises belong; and if God so punctually performed his Promise to the carnal Seed of *Abraham*, while they were to be his visible Church, that is, until Christ came, who was the promised Seed, we learn by that Example, how he will protect, defend, and support the Christian Church, to the End of the World; till Christ the promised Seed return again to judge the World, to put an end to all things, and to receive his Church into the Kingdom of his Father.

To this we owe the Continuance and Preservation of the Christian Church to this Day, amidst all the Dangers which have threatned its final Ruin: When the Church is tossed on the foaming Billows of this World, like the Ship into which Christ and his Disciples entered: *Matth. viii. 23, 24, 25.* When *there arose a great tempest in the sea, inso-much that the ship was covered with the waves; and Christ was asleep, and his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us; we perish. And he saith unto Them, why are ye so fearful, O ye of little Faith? Then he arose and rebuked the Wind and the sea, and there was a great calm.* This was a Figure and Emblem of the Condition the Church is very often in in this World: For most of our Saviour's

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Saviour's Miracles had some spiritual Significations in them: His curing the Halt, and Blind, and Lame, and Deaf, represented his diviner Power in curing the Diseases and Distempers of our Souls, in making the Blind to see, and the Deaf to hear, and the Lame to walk; and therefore when he cured the Man that was born blind, he turned his Discourse to spiritual Blindness, *John ix. 39, 40, 41.* When he had fed that great Multitude with a few Loaves and small Fishes, he discourses to them of that Bread that comes down from Heaven, and will nourish them unto eternal Life, and which he only could give them, *John vi.* When he discoursed with *Martha* about raising her Brother *Lazarus* from the dead, he preaches to her his divine Power to raise dead Souls as well as dead Bodies, into immortal Life, *John xi. 25, 26.* When the Disciples at Christ's Command had cast their Net into the Sea, (after having toiled all Night and taken nothing) and encompassed a great Multitude of Fishes, he tells them the Meaning of it, that he would make them Fishers of Men. Thus here Christ's rebuking the Wind and Sea, which were ready to swallow up the Ship wherein he and his Disciples were, is a Figure of the State of the Church in this World, and of his Readiness to protect it: How threatening soever the Dangers are, Christ is in the Ship, and all the Powers of
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the World, how much soever they rage and foam, can never swallow up that Ship, wherein Christ is, unless they can swallow him up too: And though he may seem to be asleep, and to take no notice of the Sufferings and Dangers of his Church, yet the importunate Prayers and Cries of his Disciples will awake him, and then he will arise to their Defence, and hush the Winds and Seas into a Calm.

This the Church had frequent Experience of under the Pagan Persecutions, which raged with Fire and Sword, and all the witty Arts of Cruelty; when nothing would serve but the final Extirpation of the Name of Christians: But how often did Christ rebuke the Wind and Sea, and restore profound Peace and Rest to his Church? What a glorious Triumph did he give his Church over the last and most terrible Efforts of the Pagan Powers, when he raised *Constantine* into the Throne, and made the Empire Christian?

And this is a very comfortable Consideration to us at this Time: The Protestant Churches which profess the pure and uncorrupt Faith and Worship of Christ, as to all the Essentials of Faith and Worship, have now for many Years groaned under the antichristian Tyranny and Persecutions, and now at last, and I hope it may be the last, as it is the most terrible Insult of the antichristian Powers, a great and mighty Prince bends his whole Force to root out the Protestant Name as well as to usurp upon the Liberties of Eu-

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Saviour's Miracles had some spiritual Significations in them: His curing the Halt, and Blind, and Lame, and Deaf, represented his diviner Power in curing the Diseases and Distempers of our Souls, in making the Blind to see, and the Deaf to hear, and the Lame to walk; and therefore when he cured the Man that was born blind, he turned his Discourse to spiritual Blindness, *John ix. 39, 40, 41.* When he had fed that great Multitude with a few Loaves and small Fishes, he discoursed to them of that Bread that comes down from Heaven, and will nourish them unto eternal Life, and which he only could give them, *John vi.* When he discoursed with *Martha* about raising her Brother *Lazarus* from the dead, he preaches to her his divine Power to raise dead Souls as well as dead Bodies, into immortal Life, *John xi. 25, 26.* When the Disciples at Christ's Command had cast their Net into the Sea, (after having toiled all Night and taken nothing) and encompassed a great Multitude of Fishes, he tells them the Meaning of it, that he would make them Fishers of Men. Thus here Christ's rebuking the Wind and Sea, which were ready to swallow up the Ship wherein he and his Disciples were, is a Figure of the State of the Church in this World, and of his Readiness to protect it: How threatening soever the Dangers are, Christ is in the Ship, and all the Powers of the
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the World, how much soever they rage and foam, can never swallow up that Ship, wherein Christ is, unless they can swallow him up too: And though he may seem to be asleep, and to take no notice of the Sufferings and Dangers of his Church, yet the importunate Prayers and Cries of his Disciples will awake him, and then he will arise to their Defence, and hush the Winds and Seas into a Calm.

This the Church had frequent Experience of under the Pagan Persecutions, which raged with Fire and Sword, and all the witty Arts of Cruelty; when nothing would serve but the final Extirpation of the Name of Christians: But how often did Christ rebuke the Wind and Sea, and restore profound Peace and Rest to his Church? What a glorious Triumph did he give his Church over the last and most terrible Efforts of the Pagan Powers, when he raised *Constantine* into the Throne, and made the Empire Christian?

And this is a very comfortable Consideration to us at this Time: The Protestant Churches which profess the pure and uncorrupt Faith and Worship of Christ, as to all the Essentials of Faith and Worship, have now for many Years groaned under the antichristian Tyranny and Persecutions, and now at last, and I hope it may be the last, as it is the most terrible Insult of the antichristian Powers, a great and mighty Prince bends his whole Force to root out the Protestant Name as well as to usurp upon the Liberties of Eu-

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rope: What he has done in his own Country, and where-ever his Power and Influence reached, I need not tell you: From some of his Subjects he has forced away their Faith; others to keep their Faith have lost their Estates, their Liberty, their Country, their Lives.

What Danger we were in at Home, we all saw and felt not long since, though some Men would now persuade us, it was but a Dream; but it was a very terrible Dream, if it was one, and thanks be to God that we are awakened out of it, and may we never fall into such frightful Slumbers more; or rather, let us neither be lulled asleep, nor dream awake, lest these frightful Dreams prove Realities at last.

For should that mighty Monarch prevail, and like an irresistible Torrent bear all before him; as some kind Friends to the Liberties of *Europe*, and the Protestant Name and Interest, wish and pray he may; it requires not a Spirit of Prophecy, to foretel what will become of Protestants: But our Hope and Trust is in God, that the true Christian Faith shall never be rooted out; and I am as certainly persuaded, that the Protestant Faith and Worship, as to the Essentials of it, and as opposed to Popery, is the true Christian Faith and Worship, as I am of the Truth and Certainty of Christianity itself: And when I remember by what little Beginnings, and weak and contemptible Means, God spread the true Light of the Gospel
over

over great Part of the *European* World, when it was covered with *Ægyptian* Darkness, and oppressed by the unsupportable Tyranny of Popery; notwithstanding all the Follies, Divisions and Miscarriages of Protestants, I cannot fear, that God will cause our Sun to set again, and that he will finally remove his Gospel from us; and that gives great Reason to hope, that he will check the Pride and Ambition, and put a stop to the Successes of a Prince, who glories in the Extirpation of his Protestant Subjects, and at once enslaves both the Bodies and the Souls of Men; who challenges as absolute a Dominion over the Faith, as over the Estates of his Vassals, to fill his Exchequer and Purgatory together. This, I am sure, we ought heartily to beg of God in our most solemn Prayers and Fasts: And those who scruple this, if they understand themselves, must never say the Lord's Prayer more, wherein our Saviour has taught us to pray, *Thy kingdom come*, which those who wish Success to persecuting and antichristian Powers, do not and cannot pray.

II. I observe farther, that as God's Covenant with *Abraham* and his Posterity was sure and stedfast, that no Provocations could ever tempt him utterly to destroy them, so he never inflicted any public Judgments and Calamities on them, but when he was greatly provoked by their Sins. This was God's express Covenant with them, *Levit. xxvi.* That *if they*

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walked in his statutes, and kept his commandments, then he would bestow all temporal Blessings on them, Rain in its Season, and the Increase of their Land, in Corn, and Wine, and Oil; Peace at home, and Victory abroad, and his special Presence and Favour: I will set my tabernacle amongst you; and my soul shall not abhor you: and I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people. But if they would not hearken unto him, and would not do all his Commandments, then he threatens all sorts of Evils should befall them, Sicknes of Body, to fly before their Enemies, the Unfruitfulness and Barrenness of their Land, that they shall be a Prey to wild Beasts, that the Sword shall devour them, and they shall be enslaved to their Enemies, and buy their own Bread of them; that they should suffer Famine to such Extremity, as to eat their own Sons and Daughters; that he would lay waste their Cities, and make their Country desolate; and carry them away captive into foreign Countries; as you may see at large in that Chapter: This was his Covenant with them; and this he punctually observed; whenever they did obey him, they were a happy and prosperous People, their Enemies crouched before them, they enjoyed Plenty and Peace, enlarged their Borders, and made their Neighbours Subjects and Tributaries to them; and though God did not always punish them according to their Deserts, yet he never did inflict

flit any public or national Judgments on them, but when they were grown very corrupt and wicked in their Manners; as it were easy to shew from the History of those Times, and all the remarkable Judgments God inflicted on them.

Now, I must confess, when we apply this to the Christian Church, the Case is very different, for God has not so expressly covenanted with the Christian Church for external Peace and Prosperity, as he did with the *Jews*; they were the carnal Seed and Posterity of *Abraham*, Heirs of an earthly *Canaan* and external Prosperity; but the spiritual Seed of *Abraham* are Heirs of spiritual and eternal Blessings, which were typified by the carnal Promises made to the *Jewish* Church: The Christian Church was founded in the Sufferings of our Lord; the Christian Faith was at first propagated by the Courage, Patience, and Sufferings of the Apostles and the primitive Martyrs and Confessors: The Terms our Saviour proposes to us are, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me: He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it:* And therefore the most sincere Believers, and most exemplary Christians, may suffer very severely in this World, and their Support and Comfort is, that they shall be proportionably rewarded in the next: This was the great Ob-

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jection the *Jews* made against Christians being the Sons and peculiar People of God, that they were hated and persecuted for the Faith of Christ, and God suffered them to be so; whereas he had promised all temporal Prosperity to the Observance of his Laws and Statutes; and if believing in Christ had been the Will and Commandment of God, he would certainly have made good all the Promises of their Law to the Disciples of Jesus: An Objection which very much troubled many believing *Jews* themselves, who did not thoroughly understand the Difference between the *Jewish* and Christian Dispensation, between the Law of *Moses*, and the Gospel of Christ, and therefore is particularly answered by *St. Paul*, *Rom. viii.* and in *Heb. vii.*

But this shews, that the Faith and Worship of Christ is not always rewarded with external Prosperity, and we must not expect it should be; and consequently, that very severe Sufferings and Persecutions may befall Christians, not always for the Correction and Punishment of their Sins, but for the Trial of their Faith and Patience, to make them conformed to their suffering Head, to prepare them for richer and brighter Crowns, to convince and convert their Persecutors, and to propagate the Christian Faith in the World. Though it is observed by some of the ancient Fathers, and particularly by *St. Cyprian*, that
 God

God never sent a general Persecution upon the Christian Church, but when their Sins, the general Declension of Piety and Discipline, their Worldly-mindedness, the Formality and Coldness of their Devotions, called for a Scourge.

Thus it was with the Church, while it sojourned, as I may so speak, in the World as in a strange Land, had no Place of its own, no earthly Power and Authority to support it, but lived under Pagan Powers, was intermixed with them, and oppressed by them, when they pleased; but the Case of a Christian Nation, where the Power and Authority is Christian, seems very different, and to come nearer the State of the *Jewish* Church; for God does not use to inflict public Judgments and Calamities upon Nations, but for the Punishment of some public and national Sins: And therefore a Christian Nation, which professes the true Faith and Worship of Christ, preserves the Reverence of Religion, corrects and suppresses Vice, may expect to be blessed with all external Prosperity; *for righteousness exalteth a nation*; it does so in its natural Tendency and Effects, and it does so by the Blessing of God; and therefore when God brings any public Judgments upon a Nation professing the true Faith of Christ, we have reason to take notice of God's Anger and Displeasure; to inquire what is amiss among us; what that accursed Thing is, which hath

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provoked God to Jealousy, and made him take the Rod into his Hand. We have then Reason to humble ourselves before God, to deprecate his Anger and Displeasure; to turn from all the Evil of our Ways, that he may return and be merciful to us.

But there is one thing worth observing, which may be matter of Hope and Comfort to us at this Time, that God never delivered the *Jewish* Church into the Hands of their Enemies to oppress them, never carried them away into Captivity, excepting the last Destruction of *Jerusalem*, in punishment of their Sin in crucifying their Messias, but only when they were guilty of Idolatry: A Corruption of Manners might bring other Judgments upon them; but it was generally, and I think always, for their Idolatry, that God made their Enemies rule over them, and carried them captive into a strange Land. This we have a summary Account of, *Judges* ii. How that after the Death of *Joshua* and those Elders who had seen all that God did for them, *they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtarothe; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and God delivered them into the hand of spoilers, who spoiled them, ver. 11, 12, &c.* For this Sin of Idolatry, the ten Tribes were carried away into a perpetual Captivity, and *Judah* carried captive to *Babylon*, which they were threatned with by the Prophets, for their
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their Whoredoms, that is, their Idolatries, *Hosea* ii, iv, v. And this is the Account the Prophet *Jeremy* gives of it, *Like as ye have forsaken me, and served strange gods in your land, so shall ye serve strangers in a land which is not yours*, *Jer.* v. 19.

Now in proportion to God's dealing with the *Jewish* Church, we have reason to hope, that though a Church and Nation which professes the true Faith and Worship of Christ, may be severely punished for their other Sins, yet while they preserve themselves clean from spiritual Fornication, from all antichristian Idolatries, God will not unchurch them, nor deliver them finally up into the Power of idolatrous Oppressors: I am sure we of this Nation, ever since the Reformation of Religion among us, though God has made us smart severely for our other Sins, have yet always found a watchful Providence defending us from all Attempts, though contrived with Art and Skill, and backed with Power, to reduce us again under the *Roman* Yoke. May the same good Providence still watch over us, and defend us, and neither suffer our Popish Enemies to rejoice over us, nor deluded Protestants to make dangerous and fatal Experiments.

III. When God did think fit to correct his People, he always kept the Rod in his own Hand, and prescribed the Measures and Continuance of their Sufferings. This is so plain,

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plain, from all the Promises and Threatnings of the Law, and from the Examples of God's Providence towards *Israel*, that there is no need to multiply particular Instances: There was no Good nor Evil befall *Israel*, but by a particular Providence; God inflicted Judgments on them when he saw fit, and he removed them again; he gave the Commission to Plague, and Sword, and Famine, which they could not exceed. In *Levit. xxvi.* we may observe, that God proportioned his Judgments to their Sins. When their Sins were grown so public and national, as to deserve some public Judgments, yet at first God threatens them with some more light and gentle Punishments; but if they continued incorrigible, he tells them, he had more terrible Judgments in reserve for them; which proves, that God determines the Kinds, Degrees, and Continuance of his Judgments. When *David* for his Sin in numbering the People, had that hard Choice given him, of *seven years famine, or to flee three months before his enemies, or three days pestilence*; he answers, *Let me fall now into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.* That is, he chose Pestilence before the Sword; for Pestilence is God's immediate Hand; and though the Sword be God's Judgment too, yet it is put into the Hands of Men, who gratify their own Lust and Rage and Revenge

venge with it. And yet, though God leaves more to Man in this, than in any other Judgments, he does not put the Sword wholly out of his own Hands, when he puts it into the Hands of Men, but gives Laws to it; as appears from the Example of the King of Assyria, whom God sent against Jerusalem, *To take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the street. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a few: Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, (what he himself, not what the King of Assyria intended to do) I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks, Isa. x. 5, 6, 7, — 12.*

Now God has the same tender Care of a Christian Nation, that he had of Israel; he mingles our Cup for us, he prescribes what we shall suffer, and how long; and he corrects as a Father, not to destroy, but to reform: And this is a mighty Comfort, that whatever Men threaten, we are in the Hands of God, who has the Winds and Seas at his Command, *who giveth salvation to kings, who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword, Psal. cxliv. 10.* The most powerful Oppressors are but the Rod of God's Anger; the more fierce and savage Instruments God employs to correct us, we may conclude,

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conclude, the more angry God is ; but whatever the Rod is, it is God that strikes, who knows when to strike, and when to spare: We never have any Reason to be afraid of Men, whatever their Power, how great soever their Rage and Vengeance be ; but ought to pray to God as the Prophet does. *O Lord correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing, Jer. x. 24. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy sore displeasure ; have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak, O Lord heal me, for my bones are vexed, Psal. vi. 1, 2. Or as it is in Psal. lvi. 1, 2, 3. Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up, he fighting daily oppresseth me ; mine enemies would daily swallow me up, for they be many that rise up against me, O thou most High. What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee ; in God I will praise his word ; in God I have put my trust, I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.*

IV. When God does think fit to correct his People, yet he always removes his Judgments upon their sincere Repentance: This was God's express Covenant with *Israel*, *Levit. xxvi. 40, 41, 42. If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with the trespass which they trespassed against me ; and also that they have walked contrary to me, and that I also have walked contrary to them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies ; if then their uncircumcised hearts be*

be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquities, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember, and I will remember the land.

Thus in the time of the Judges, when God for their Sins delivered them into the Hands of their Enemies, when they cried to God, he raised up Saviours for them: Nay, many times, when their Repentance was not very sincere nor lasting, yet in great Goodness and Compassion he spared them: *When he slew them, then they sought him, and returned, and inquired early after God; and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer; nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongue, for their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant; but he being full of compassion forgave their iniquities, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. For he remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again, Psal. lxxviii. 34, &c.*

So that how angry soever God be, we have a certain way of appeasing his Anger. Nothing but Sin can provoke a merciful God, and a compassionate Father to punish; he has a great Tenderness for all his Creatures; *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children*

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dren of men; and therefore he is more easily appeased than he is provoked; Judgment is his strange Work, but he delights in Acts of Mercy, and seems pleased with an honourable Occasion to shew Mercy, without exposing his Laws and Government to Contempt: And therefore Repentance and Reformation will always appease him; nay sometimes we see, that the very Shews and Appearance of a public and solemn Repentance, though it be not so sincere and hearty as it ought to be, makes him stay his Hand, and expect our Return. And this is a great Encouragement, and a powerful Obligation on us, to return to God when he strikes, to humble ourselves under his mighty Hand; for there is no other way to remove his Judgments, and this will do it.

It is a vain Thing to trust in Armies and Navies, in the Courage and Conduct of Princes and Generals, when our Sins fight against us, when God refuses to go forth with our Armies: *For no king is saved by the multitude of an host; a horse is a vain thing for safety, neither shall he deliver any by his great strength; but the eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercies,* Psal. xxxiii. 16, 17, 18.

Nay, the Justice and Righteousness of our Cause will not always secure us of Success; for those who have a very just Cause may deserve to be punished; and then God may justly

justly punish them, and deliver them into the Hands of their Enemies: God does not always determine what is right and wrong by the Events of War; for he is the sovereign Judge of the World, and may punish a wicked Nation by unjust Oppressors, as he often did the *Israelites*.

The Profession of the true Religion will not always secure us, when our Sins cry for Vengeance: When the *Jews* cried, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord*; the Prophet told them, *they trusted in lying words; for will ye steal, and murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say we are delivered to do all these abominations?*

Jer. vii. 4,—10. To glory in the Profession of the true Faith, or in a vigorous Opposition to the Errors and Corruptions of Religion, when we are Atheists or Infidels in our Lives, may make God punish us, but is no reason on our Part, why he should save us; but true and sincere Repentance will save us. We profess the sincere Faith of Christ, we fight in a just Cause, if it be lawful to defend ourselves against the powerful Oppressor of the Protestant, that is, the true Christian Faith, and the Liberties of *E: ope*; and we have no reason to fear any thing but our Sins: Let us but reform our Lives, and put away the Evil of our Doings, and our Arms will

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will be as prosperous as our Cause is just : God will then gird our princes and soldiers with strength to the battle ; will teach their hands to war, and their fingers to fight.

V. Faith and Prayer are more powerful than Arms ; as it must necessarily be, if God only gives Victory and Success. This we learn from the whole History of the Jews ; the Apostle to the Hebrews gives us a particular Account of the Power of Faith, *Heb. xi. 32, 33, 34.* Of Gideon, and Barach, and Sampson, and Jephtha, and David, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Moses's Prayer was more powerful than Joshua's Arms ; for when Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed ; when he let down his hands, Amaleck prevailed, *Exod. xvii. 11.* Hezekiah's Prayer overthrew the Assyrian Army, when Rabshakeh came against Jerusalem, and reproached them with their Trust in God. We must not indeed expect such miraculous Victories as God gave to Israel, but this makes no difference ; for the Power of Faith and Prayer is the same still ; and all Victory is God's still, who gives Success as well by invisible Means, and seeming Accidents, as by the most visible Interposal of a miraculous Power : For God gave
Israel

Israel miraculous Deliverances; not because he could not save them without a Miracle, but because he would make it visible to all the World, that he was their Saviour. But still God hears our Prayers, and answers them; he is still the Saviour and Deliverer of all those who trust in him, and hope in his Mercy; and therefore the only sure Way to conquer our Enemies, is to prevail with God by our fervent and importunate Prayers for a Blessing upon our Arms; to pray in Faith, in Hope, with an intire Dependence on God, and a perfect Resignation to his Will: Thus *Gideon*, and *Barak*, and *David*, and the Worthies of old, subdued Kingdoms, waxed valiant in Fight, and turned to flight the Armies of Aliens; and there is no other Way that I know of, still: If God be still the only Giver of Victory, Faith and Prayer is still the only Way to obtain Victory from God; and therefore if we are cold and remiss in our Prayers; if we do not pray at all, or expect nothing from our Prayers, let us not charge any ill Success to ill Conduct or Cowardice, but to our Infidelity and Irreligion; and indeed this is the only melancholy Consideration in our present Circumstances; if the Courage and Conduct of a Prince, if the Bravery and Resolution of Soldiers, if a numerous Army and Navy, if an Arm of Flesh could give Victory, we have reason to hope well; but if God go not

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forth with our Armies, all our other Preparations are vain; and how can we expect that, when we will not ask it, or only mock God with some formal and customary Addresses, without being concerned whether he hears or no; or without expecting or at least without trusting and depending on his Help?

VI. But to encourage those good Men, how few soever there are among us, who have a great Sense of the divine Providence, and a firm Trust and Faith in God, to be very importunate in their Prayers for this Church and Nation, I observe farther, that God many times has spared a wicked People at the earnest Intercessions of some few good Men. Thus at the Intercession of *Abraham*, God promised to have spared *Sodom*, had there been ten righteous Persons found in that great City: God spared *Israel*, when they had so provoked him by their Idolatries, that he threatned to destroy them, only at the Importunity of *Moses*, as the Psalmist observes; *therefore he said, he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them*, Psal. cvi. 23. the Story of which we have, *Exod.* xxii. 7, 8. At another time, when they had provoked God by their Idolatries and Whoredoms with the Daughters of *Moab*, and the Plague broke in among them, *then stood up Phineas and*

executed judgment, and the plague was stayed, Numb. xxv. And therefore when God declared his Resolution to punish them, he forbad his Prophet so much as to pray for them, *Jer. vii. 16.* And in *Ezek. xiv. 14.* professes, that he would not accept of any Intercessions for them: *Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, yet they shall deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord:* Which supposes, that at another time, the Intercessions of these good Men would have prevailed; and that it is very extraordinary for God to deny it.

And if the importunate Prayers of a few good Men may obtain Victory and Success, and save a Church and Nation; let every good Man at this time cry mightily to God, especially as the Prophet *Isaiah* exhorts, *Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, Isa. lxii. 6, 7.*

VII. To add no more, and it is a very comfortable Consideration, God many times saved *Israel* for his own Name's sake, when their Sins provoked him to destroy them. *Isa. xlviii. 9. For my name sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off.* And ver. 11. *For mine own sake, even for mine own sake will I do it; for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory to another.*

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Thus God assigns the Reason, why he did not destroy *Israel* in the Wilderness, when they so highly provoked him. *I wrought for my names sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Ægypt, Ezek. xx. 9.* That is, they were God's peculiar People, the only Worshipers of the Lord Jehovah, whom he had brought out of *Ægypt* by a mighty Hand, to make his Name known in the World; and though they never so much deserved to be destroyed, had he then destroyed them, his own great Name would have suffered with them; as *Moses* pleaded with God; *Wherefore should the Ægyptians say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Exod. xxxii. 12.* And thus the Psalmist prays, *Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, and deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy names sake; wherefore should the heathen say, where is their God? Let him be known among the heathen in our sight, by revenging the blood of thy servants, which is shed, Psalm lxxix. 9, 10.*

And this is matter of Hope to us, that though our Sins are very great, yet God will not utterly destroy us, but will send Deliverance for *his names sake*; for the Sake of that

holy Faith which is professed among us; lest our antichristian Enemies should triumph and say, *Where is now their God?* When the Preservation of a wicked People is for the Defence and Honour of the true Christian Faith, we have reason to hope, and good Men have a very powerful Argument to plead with God, that *he will save us for his own names sake.*



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S E R M O N IV.

Preached before the Queen, at *White-hall*, February 12, 169 $\frac{1}{2}$

MATT. iv. I.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil.

THE Temptation of our Saviour, after his fasting forty Days, is a very proper Subject for our Meditation at this time; and suggests so many useful Observations, that I shall not waste any Time in a needless Preface; but shall,

I. Consider in general, what concerns his Temptation; and

II. Explain the Nature of those particular Temptations wherewith the Devil assaulted him.

I. In general, concerning our Saviour's being tempted by the Devil: Now to tempt, is to make a Trial and Experiment; and

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when the Devil tempts, it is to try, if he can persuade or seduce us from the Fear, and Worship, and Obedience of God.

I. Now, in the first Place, it is very observable, that Christ himself, when he became Man, was tempted of the Devil ; and there is no greater Mystery in this, than that he was liable to Hunger and Cold, and had all the innocent Appetites, Inclinations, Infirmities of human Nature ; that is, that he was a true and real Man. The Ancients generally conclude, that the Devil did not know at this time, how great a Person our Saviour was, even the eternal Son of God ; for it is hardly credible, that had he known this, he would have made so vain and hopeless an Attempt on him. It is likely enough, he thought him to be some extraordinary Person : He knew by the ancient Prophecies, that the Messias was to appear ; and knew from the Prophet *Daniel*, that the Time for his Coming was accomplished ; nay, it is probable, he knew all the Circumstances of his Birth, and heard that Testimony God gave him at his Baptism, *This is my beloved Son* ; but he saw he was a Man, though an extraordinary Man ; and might not know that he was any thing more ; and having formerly foiled our first Parents in Paradise, in the State of Innocence, hoped for the like Success again.

Now if Christ himself was tempted by the Devil, none of us must hope to escape ; tempted we shall be, and therefore must take
care

care to stand upon our Guard, and to fortify our Minds against all Temptations.

And this Encouragement we have from the Example of our Saviour, that to be tempted is no Sin, unless we yield to a Temptation; for he was tempted as we are, yet without Sin; and we cannot imagine, had it been a Sin to be tempted, that God would have permitted the Devil to have tempted our Saviour; which may ease the Fears of some melancholy Christians, who are afflicted with evil and tempting Thoughts which their Souls abhor; for whatever the Cause of such Thoughts be, whether frightened and disturbed Imagination, or the Suggestion of wicked Spirits, they can no more defile the Soul which abhors and rejects them with Grief and Indignation, than they can the Paper on which they are writ.

Nay, hence we learn, that God many times exercises those with the greatest and most difficult Trials and Temptations, who are most dear to him. He had no sooner proclaimed Christ his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased, but he leads him by the Spirit into the Wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil.

This Life is a State of Trial and Probation; and Temptations, though they create some Trouble and Difficulty to good Men, yet do them no Hurt. If good Men conquer, Temptations do but exercise, increase,
and

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and confirm their Graces, and make them great and illustrious Examples to the World, glorify the divine Power in the Victories and Triumphs of his Servants, over the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; give them a secure Hope in God, and a transporting Sense of his Love, and prepare great Rewards for them in the next Life. And if they happen in any particular Encounter to be overcome, as St. *Peter* himself was, when he denied his Master; yet they rise again with Glory; and the Sense of their Sin, and the Shame of a Defeat, fills them with Sorrow, Indignation, Self-revenge; gives them new Spirit, Vigour. Activity, Resolution; makes them more patient of Hardships and Sufferings, more unwearied in doing good, more humble and modest, and more perfectly resigned to the Will of God, to dispose of them and their Services to his own Glory as he pleases.

God does not train up those whom he loves, and whom he prepares for Glory, in Ease and Softness; *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*: And the more difficult Temptations he exposes us to, the greater Honour he does us; the more glorious will our Triumphs, the richer and brighter will our Crowns be. Let us then behold our Saviour in the Wilderness, separated from human Conversation, and all the Comforts of Life, in the midst of wild Beasts and tempt-
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ing Spirits, and not think, that God uses us hardly, if at any time he lets loose the Tempter upon us, and gives him Power over all we have, as he did in the Case of *Job*, to afflict us in our Relations, our Bodies, our Estates, good Names, or whatever gives us the sharpest and keenest Sense of Suffering, and is the most difficult Exercise of our Faith.

2dly, Let us consider the Time when our Saviour was tempted, *viz.* immediately after his Baptism, *being full of the Holy Ghost*, Luke iv. 1.

First, As soon as our Saviour was baptized, he was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness. For *Then*, in my Text, relates to the Time of his Baptism; and St. *Luke* tells us, this was done in his Return from *Jordan*, where he was baptized by *John*.

By this religious Rite, our Saviour had devoted himself to the immediate Service of God in the Salvation of Mankind, and was inaugurated into his prophetic Office, by that Testimony which was given to him by a Voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*; and this was the critical Time, both for the Devil to tempt, and for our Saviour to baffle all his Temptations, and to triumph over him.

Could the Devil have conquered our Saviour in this first Assault, there had been an End of this glorious Design of Man's Salvation, when he had enslaved and captivated the
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the Saviour himself ; and therefore he began as early with the second *Adam* as he did with the first, though not with the like Success. Had our first Parents resisted the first Temptation, we had been happy for ever ; but they yielded, and brought Death upon themselves and their Posterity : But the Seed of the Woman, whom God had promised should break the Serpent's Head, who *was made manifest to destroy the works*, the Kingdom and the Power, *of the Devil*, by God's Order and Appointment, first encounters him in his own Person, resists his most furious Assaults, makes him retreat with Shame and Despair, as foreseeing his own Destiny, and the final Destruction of his Kingdom. As the old Serpent seduced our first Parents in Paradise, and brought Sin, and Misery, and Death into the World, so it was very fitting that the Saviour of Mankind should give the first Proof of his divine Power in conquering the Tempter.

This gives us great Encouragement to fight under Christ's Banners against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil ; for the Captain of our Salvation has already conquered ; and if we are not wanting to ourselves, we *shall be more than conquerors through Christ who strengthens us*.

He knows what the Power of Temptations is, and what Measures of Grace are necessary to resist them ; and if we do not forsake

forfake him, he will not forsake us. He has conquered himself, and knows how to conquer ; and if we faithfully adhere to him, we shall conquer too.

Nay, in case we should sometime be conquered ; this has made him *a merciful and compassionate High-Priest, being in all things tempted like as we are* : He knows the Weakness of human Nature, and the Power and Subtilty of the Tempter, and prays for us, as he did for St. Peter, *That our faith fail not* ; that if we fall, we may rise again by Repentance : And this is a mighty Consolation, *That if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*, who is not only a Propitiation for our Sins, but was tempted also as we are.

Secondly, St. Luke observes, that our Saviour was *full of the Holy Ghost*, (which he received without measure at his Baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended like a Dove, and rested on him) before he was led by the Spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.

For human Nature (and it was the human Nature of Christ on which the Holy Ghost descended) cannot resist such powerful Assaults without divine Assistances. And the Example of our Saviour assures us, that God will not expose us to any Temptations, without giving us proportionable Measures of Grace to resist them : That if we are at any time conquered, it is not for want of Power,
but

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but for want of Will to conquer: That is, the Fault is wholly our own, and we cannot blame God for it.

I doubt, there are few Men in the World but the Devil (had he the full Power of tempting) could find out some Temptations too big for them; but the divine Goodness is seen, as well in restraining the Power of the Devil, that we shall not be tempted above what we are able to bear, as by the strengthening our Minds by the internal Assistances of his Grace; and therefore our Saviour has taught us to pray, *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.* *απο τε πονηρας*, from the Wicked One; which does not signify, that we may never be tempted, which is impossible, while we live in Bodies of Flesh and Blood, and are encompassed with all the flattering Objects of Flesh and Sense; but that God would not give us up into the Power of the Devil, to be tempted above what we are able.

Some of the Ancients observe from this Story, that when we devote and consecrate ourselves to God, we must expect to be tempted as our Saviour was: As for bad Men, who are the Slaves and Vassals of the Devil, he cannot so properly be said to tempt, as to govern them; for *he is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*: But when Men desert his Service, he is very busy to recover his Slaves again; but then our Comfort
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and Security too, is, that when we give up ourselves to the Service of God, he takes us into his Protection ; the Wicked One cannot touch us without his Leave, and he always proportions our Trials to our Strength.

3dly, Consider the Place of our Saviour's Temptation, *He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness*, where there were no tempting Objects, but yet there the tempting Spirit found him.

Some Men think, that the surest Way to get rid of Temptations, is to get out of the World ; to withdraw themselves from human Conversation ; or to make a shew of doing it, without doing it ; as if the Devil could not follow them into a Desert, or a Cell. While we live in Bodies of Flesh and Blood, we may be tempted wherever we are : If we mortify our sensual Appetites, and our Love to this World, we may live very innocently in the World ; if we do not, we can never get rid of the World, but wherever we go, we carry it in our Hearts.

Do these Men imagine, they can never be tempted to Lust, unless they daily see and converse with beautiful Women ? Or that they cannot love the World without living in a Court, and enjoying all the Ease and Luxury of a plentiful Fortune ? Or that it is not possible to despise the World with as much Haughtiness and Vanity of Mind, as any Man has, who most admires it ? That a Monk cannot
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be as proud as an Emperor, and glory as much in a sullen Retirement, in voluntary Austerities, in an affected Poverty, in a vain Opinion of extraordinary Sanctity, as any Man can do in Wealth and Power? Whence came all those Superstitions, which have corrupted both the Faith and Worship of Christianity, and done more Mischief to the Church and Religion, than all the Looseness of a secular Life, but from Deserts and the Cells of Monks and Hermits? Which proves that the Devil has his Temptations for the Wilderness, as well as for the Court; for the most religious Devotees, and melancholy Enthusiasts, as well as for the Men of this World; and those the most dangerous Temptations too; which as Experience tells us, open a Back-door for Pride, and Ambition, and secular Power, and a general Corruption of Manners, to enter into the Church, and into the Lives of Christians: And therefore we must guard ourselves against the Tempter, as well in our greatest Solitudes and Retirements from the World, as in a Crowd of Business. We must have a care of the Temptations of Devotion and Mortification, of Fastings and Penances, of a sullen Discontent at this World, as well as of the Temptations of a busy Life, and of an easy and prosperous Fortune.

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4thly, I observe, that Christ *was led by the Spirit into the wilderuess*, to be tempted of the Devil ; that is, it was God's Appointment, not his own voluntary Choice. And this teaches us manfully to resist Temptations, when the Providence of God, and the unavoidable Circumstances of our Condition bring us into Temptations, but not presumptuously to thrust ourselves into them.

There is always Danger in Temptations, especially when we rashly venture upon them. *Let not him that putteth on his armour, boast as he that putteth it off*, is true in our spiritual Warfare. We have seen great Men conquered, even St. Peter himself ; and therefore, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall*, and not unnecessarily venture too near a Precipice, where he may be in Danger of falling.

Our Saviour has taught us to pray, that God would not *lead us into temptation* as I observed before ; much less then ought we to lead ourselves into Temptation. We may easily presume too far upon the Strength of our Faith, our Courage, our Resolution, as St. Peter did, who, had he been more diffident of himself, had kept out of the High-Priest's Hall, and escaped the Temptation which he could not resist.

We daily see, that Men who presume upon the Strength of their Constitution, and use their Bodies ill, destroy their Health, and

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shorten their Lives, while Men who feel their own weak and crazy Temper, live on with Care to a good old Age; and thus it is with respect to the Mind, as well as to the Body: Presumption will destroy those, whom Fear and Caution will secure; and therefore, *let us not be high-minded, but fear.*

There are a great many Ways, whereby Men expose themselves to Temptation, and tempt even the Tempter; some of which are very obvious: As to keep ill Company, whose Conversation is a daily Temptation: Sloth and Idleness, which betrays Men to any Wickedness which offers itself: For it is an uneasy Thing to have nothing to do, and that itself is a Temptation, and the Devil never wants Business to employ such Men in; and I know nothing worse than this, but when Men choose such Business, as is nothing else but Idleness and Vanity, or can only minister to their own or to other Mens Lusts.

But there are other Ways, whereby Men thrust themselves into Temptations, without considering what they do. I might name many, but shall content myself with some few at present, which are least observed, and which prove Snares to good Men; as for instance: To impose upon ourselves constant Tasks of Religion, that we will read and pray so much, and so often every Day, and observe voluntary Fasts, and abstain from such

such innocent Diversions, &c. which Men commonly resolve in some great Heats and Fits of Devotion, which they fancy will continue in the same Fervor, but never do ; and then these Tasks grow very uneasy, as every thing of Religion does when it grows a Task ; and then they degenerate into Dullness and Formality, and then Men either leave them off, and with that are tempted to leave off Religion itself ; or they are so very cold, that they fancy themselves spiritually dead, and fall into Melancholy, into Desertions, into Despair itself.

It is a dangerous Thing for Men by rash and arbitrary Vows, to tie themselves up from doing that, which otherwise they might very innocently do, and which they will be strongly tempted to do, when they have vowed not to do it. The Guides of Souls know, that this is no imaginary Case, but what they so often meet with, and see such ill Effects of, that it is very fit to warn Men of the Snare. Were there no other Reason against the monkish Vows of Celibacy, Poverty, and Obedience, I should think this sufficient, that considered only as perpetual Vows, they are a dangerous State of Temptation ; and for my own Part, I would never advise any Man to make a perpetual Vow to do or not to do any thing, which it is not perpetually his Duty to do or not to do.

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Thus, to marry with Persons of a disagreeable Age, or a disagreeable Humour, or a contrary Religion, is to put ourselves into a State of Temptation ; but such particular Instances would be endless, and therefore I forbear.

If God lead us into Temptation, he will give us sufficient Strength to resist, if we improve his Grace ; if we lead ourselves into Temptation, and God leave us to the Power and Subtilty of the Tempter, the Sin and the Folly is our own.

5thly, I observe, by what means our Saviour conquered the Devil's Temptations, and that was by the Authority, and by the Word of God : *It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone. It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* These are such Answers, as would admit of no Reply ; for the Authority of God can never be answered.

And thus we must conquer also, if ever we will conquer, by a firm Faith in God, and Belief of his Word : Faith is our Shield, and the Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit, and we have no other sure Defence against all Temptations.

This ruined our first Parents in Paradise, when their Reason and natural Powers were in their greatest Vigour, Perfection, and Integrity, that instead of insisting on God's Authority,

Authority, they ventured to reason the Case with the Tempter. Set aside the Authority of God, and the Devil will quickly outwit and out-reason us ; he is skilled in all the Arts of Deceit, and Methods of Persuasions ; and without God's Authority, our Courage, our Resolution, our Honour, our Reason itself, even all the Rants and triumphant Speculations of Philosophy, will fail us in the Day of Trial ; to tempt, is either to deceive, or to persuade ; and there is no other secure Defence against either but the Authority and the Word of God. The wisest Reasoner may be imposed on by so artificial a Tempter ; but God can neither deceive, nor be deceived ; and then while we believe God, and have regard to his Commands, we cannot be deceived neither : And what is able to resist all the Terrors and Flatteries of the World and the Flesh, but the Authority of that God who is our Maker and our Judge ? What insignificant Names are Virtue and Vice, how weak and feeble is the Sense of Decency and Honour, and the Dignity of human Nature, and of a Life of Reason (after we have read or writ so many Volumes about it) when we feel the soft Charms of Pleasure, and our Eyes are filled with visible Glories ? Who would not part with a fine Thought or two, with some pretty Notions of moral Beauty, and intellectual Pleasures, for a Happiness which may be seen and felt ? But the Au-

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thority of God, the firm Belief of his Promises and Threatnings, the Hopes and Fears of another World, are beyond all other Persuasions, unless any thing can persuade a Man to be eternally miserable.

This may suffice to be spoke in general, concerning our Saviour's Temptation. We come now to consider,

II. The particular Temptations wherewith our Saviour was assaulted; and they are Three.

I. The first was to relieve his Hunger, after his long Fasting, by working a Miracle: *And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.*

This was a very artificial Temptation, which it may be none but Christ himself would have been aware of: For what Hurt was it, for the Son of God to work a Miracle? What Hurt was it for a Man, who was hungry, to relieve his Hunger? For here was no Temptation to Excess, but to satisfy the Necessities of Nature: What Hurt was it for him, who afterwards fed so many Thousands by Miracles, in this great Distress to have wrought a Miracle to satisfy his own Hunger? This was very plausible, and looked like very charitable Advice; but yet there was a secret Snare in it.

First, For this was made a Trial, whether he were the Son of God, or not, *If thou be*
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the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread: Now, had he complied with this, it had argued a Distrust of his Relation to God, and of the Love of his Father; and this was a Temptation to Sin. Thus the Tempter dealt with our first Parents, made them jealous of God's good Intentions towards them, and by that tempted them to Disobedience. *The serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die. For God knoweth, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* That is, God envies your Happiness, and therefore has forbid you to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Thus the Devil suggested to our Saviour, that he had great Reason to question, whether he were the Son of God, because he was destitute of all the Comforts and Supports of Life, and after forty Days fasting, had nothing in the Wilderness to eat, unless he would turn Stones into Bread.

And though this Part of the Temptation our Saviour takes no Notice of in his Answer, but scorns it; yet we find it makes a very powerful Impression upon other Men, who are apt to measure God's Love or Hatred by present Things; when they are prosperous, they conclude they are the Favourites of Heaven; when they are afflicted and meet with cross Events, then God is angry with

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them, and has forsaken them : And though this argues such a stupid Ignorance of Christianity, that one would think it could be no Temptation to a Christian ; yet it is too notorious, that three Parts of the Melancholy, the Desertions, nay, Despair of many Christians, is owing to no other Cause ; they think their Condition safe for the next World, while they are prosperous in this ; but as soon as the World begins to frown, they are irrecoverably damned : But would such Men consider, that our Saviour himself wanted Bread in the Wilderness, and had no Place whereon to lay his Head ; it would cure these Desertions, if there be no greater Guilt, which a strait Fortune awakens the Sense of, which I doubt is too often the Case.

Secondly, There was another Snare in this, to persuade our Saviour, to supply the Necessities of Nature by extraordinary Means, without the immediate Direction and Command of God ; for this had been a Distrust of God's Care and Providence, to have relieved his own Wants by preternatural and uncommanded Methods : And therefore, to this he answers, *It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* That is, Bread indeed is the ordinary Provision God has made for the Support of Man's Life ; but when these ordinary and natural Provisions fail, he has other Ways to support Life, as he
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fed the *Israelites* with Manna and Quails in the Wilderness, and gave them Drink out of a Rock ; but then we must patiently and securely expect by what means God will provide for us ; and till the *word proceed out of his mouth*, till we have some particular Command and Direction for it, we must take no extraordinary, uncommanded, much less forbidden Ways, to preserve our Lives : For this is want of Trust in God, or want of Submission to his Will. Extreme Want and Necessity is almost an irresistible Temptation to human Nature, to distrust the ordinary Provisions of Providence, and to provide for ourselves by what means we can ; and to justify what we do by such Necessities ; it requires a great degree of Faith and Trust in God, when we have no Prospect of ordinary Succours, patiently to expect God's Provision, without going out of God's Way : But thus our Saviour was tempted, and has taught us how to conquer this Temptation, *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God* : If Bread fail, we must expect by what other means God will supply our Wants, and not transgress those Laws God hath prescribed us, how desperate soever our Condition seem to be.

2. The next Temptation is in the other Extreme, to presume so far upon his Interest in God's Favour and Protection, as to make dangerous and vain-glorious Experiments of
God's

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God's Care: *He set him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou shouldst dash thy foot against a stone.*

When the Tempter perceived, that Christ wholly relied on the Directions and Authority of Scripture, he inforces his Temptation with Scripture too, misunderstood and misapplied. And these are the most dangerous Temptations of all, which impose upon Men with a Shew of Religion, as our late Experience of a wild enthusiastic Age will tell us; when nothing so bad could be thought of, but some Men had Scripture Examples, or Precepts, or Prophecies, or Parables, to justify it; and therefore we must be aware of this, as well as of all the other Arts and Stratagems of the Tempter.

In answer to this, our Saviour proves, that this Text could not mean, that God would command his Angels to bear him up in their Hands, if he should fling himself from the Pinnacle of the Temple, because we are expressly forbid, to make such Experiments of God's Protection, as this: *It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

To tempt, is to try; and to tempt God, is to try what he will or can do for us, beyond his Promise, and beyond the ordinary Methods

thods of his Providence; especially when we either murmur against God, for not answering our unreasonable Demands, or presume upon his Favour to do that which he has forbid us to do, or expect his Protection and Blessing, when we put ourselves out of the ordinary Protection of his Providence: It were easy, had I Time, to give Instances of all these Ways of tempting God; the Temptation of our Saviour concerns the last I mentioned, out of a vain-glorious Humour, and a Presumption of God's peculiar Favour to us, voluntarily, without any reasonable Pretext, much less Necessity, to thrust ourselves into apparent and unavoidable Dangers, and expect God should save us by Miracles; for this is what our Saviour was tempted to, to fling himself down from the Pinnacle of the Temple in a presumptuous Confidence of God's Care of him, that he would command his Angels to bear him up in their Hands.

This looks like Faith in God, a plerophory of Hope, and full Assurance of his Love, but indeed is Vanity, Pride, Insolence, Presumption, and a tempting of God. It is such an Affront and Indignity, as wise Men will not bear from their best Friends, when they impose upon them, not to do them a real Kindness, but to gratify their Vanity and Humour in such Demands as a wise Man cannot honourably grant.

And

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And yet there is a more dangerous and fatal Presumption than this, when Men have such a strong Imagination of their being the Sons, the chosen and elect People of God, that they think they cannot do any thing to forfeit God's Love; they may make more bold with God's Laws than other Men, for *God sees no sin in his people*; nay, indeed, that it is no Sin to advance themselves, and the Cause they have espoused, which they call the Glory of God, by extraordinary Means, that is by transgressing all the known and ordinary Rules of Justice and Charity.

These are dangerous Temptations, and we have seen the miserable Effects of them; and therefore let no Man think, that he is so great a Favourite of Heaven, as to have God at his Beck to save him by Miracles, when he wilfully exposes himself to such Dangers, as nothing but Miracles can deliver him from; much less to think, that God will alter the Nature of Good and Evil for his sake; that he will dispense with his Laws, (Laws which are as eternal and unchangeable as his own Nature) whenever such vain Enthusiasts pretend to serve themselves and his Glory by the Breach of them: *It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

3. These two Temptations were managed with great Art to deceive; the third is open and bare-faced. The Devil, in express Words, tempts him to Idolatry, with the Promise of all

all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them ; which he had drawn a beautiful Landskip of, and shewed him from a high Mountain : *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me* : Or, as St. Luke relates it, *All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them ; for it is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it.* Which, in some sense, was true at that time ; not that the Devil had the supreme and absolute Disposal of Kingdoms ; for St. Paul assures us, that all the Powers even of the Pagan World, were of God, and ordained by God^a. But yet he was at that time the God of this World, and had a more visible Kingdom than God himself. The true Worshipers of God were at that time chiefly confined to *Judea*, a very little Spot of Earth ; but all the Power and Glory of the World was in the Hands of Idolaters, who worshiped the Devil and wicked Spirits : And the Force of the Argument is, as if he had said to our Saviour, You call yourself the Son of God, and worship him, but will God do that for you, which I can and will do, if you worship me ? You yourself see, that he has no Kingdom but *Judea* to bestow on you, and that also is at present in the Hands of my Worshipers ; but what is that to all the Kingdoms of the World, which

^a Rom. xiii. 1.

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are at my Disposal, and which you see yourself are mine, and under my Government. But our Saviour, without disputing the Value of this World, or what Power the Devil had in the Disposal of it, chides away the Tempter with Indignation, Be gone, Satan, *for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* But though Christ refused this Proffer, his pretended Vicar has taken it, and revived the old Pagan Idolatry for the Kingdoms of the World and the Glory of them.

This is the prevailing Temptation to this Day, to corrupt Religion, the Faith and Worship of God, for some temporal Advantages : Too many Men think that the best Religion, which will best serve a secular Interest : And we have reason to think, that too many do this, and know what they do ; that their furious Zeal for a false Religion is not all Ignorance and Mistake, but an undissembled Love of this World : For can we think, that the Devil never tempted any Man but Christ, knowingly and willingly to renounce the true Religion, and the true Worship of God for this World ? No doubt he does, and very often prevails too ; and these knowing Idolaters, who make a downright Bargain to worship the Devil for the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, are those who abuse the Ignorant and Credulous with a false and hypocritical Zeal.

But

But let us remember, that we must worship the Lord our God, and him only must we serve : Let us remember what our Saviour tells us, *What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?* Let us remember, that the End of Religion is to please God, to glorify him, to be like him, and to enjoy him for ever ; and this will give us a secure Victory over the World and the Devil : Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ : To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever. *Amen.*

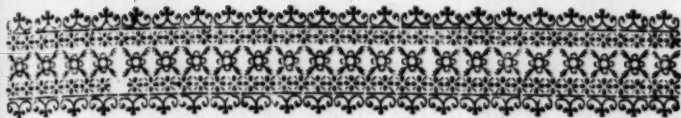




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S E R M O N V.

Preached before the Right Honourable
the Lord Mayor, at St. *Bridget's*
Church, on *Tuesday* in *Easter*
Week, 1692.

LUKE vi. 35.

*But love ye your enemies,— (and do
good, and lend, hoping for nothing
again) and your reward shall be
great, and ye shall be the children
of the Highest, for he is kind to the
unthankful and to the evil.*

 UR Conformity to the Death and
Resurrection of our Saviour, con-
sists in dying to Sin, and walking
in Newness of Life, which St. *Paul*
tells us is represented by the external Ce-
remony of Baptism; the baptized Person
being buried with Christ in Baptism, and
rising out of his watry Grave a new born
VOL. I. I Creature,

Creature, *Rom. vi. 3, 4.* For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, 9, 10. And the principal Exercise of this divine Life, which is our Conformity to the Resurrection of Christ, is a divine Conversation. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right-hand of God: Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth, *Col. iii. 1, 2.* And to set our affections on things above, does not only signify to think sometimes of Heaven, and to desire to go to Heaven when we die, which very worldly minded men may do; but to lay up for ourselves Treasures in Heaven, which are durable and eternal, in opposition to those perishing Treasures on Earth, which are subject to Thieves, to Moths, and Rust. *Matth. vi. 19, 20, 21.* To make to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations, *Luke xvi. 9.* Now ye all know what this means: viz. To purge our Minds from the Love of Riches, and from all covetous Desires; to improve our Estates in Acts of Piety and Charity, for the Service of God, and to supply the Wants of the Poor and Miserable: To return our Money into the other World, where it will increase into eternal Life and Glory: For this is truly to have
our

Lending without Usury. 115

our Conversation in Heaven, to live above this World, to sit loose from all the Enjoyments of it; to live to God, and another World; to improve every thing we enjoy here, to secure and advance our future Happiness: When Men are charitable upon these Principles and these Designs, they must live a very heavenly Life; *for where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also.*

This our Ancestors, who appointed this annual Solemnity, seem to have been very sensible of, that there is no particular Grace or Virtue, the Exercise of which is a more visible Demonstration of a divine and purified Mind, which is risen with Christ, and lives to God, as Christ doth, than the Grace of Charity; and therefore that there was no Time more proper to exercise Charity, and to exhort Christians to Charity, and to shew Charity in all its Pomp and humble Bravery, than the Feast of the Resurrection; wherein we commemorate the Love of our Lord in dying for us, and his Triumph over Death, and in full Assurance of a blessed Immortality, of which the Resurrection of our Saviour was an ocular Demonstration; send our Hearts and our Eyes after him to Heaven, and contemplate that Glory to which he is advanced, and to which he has promised to advance us.

This then is my proper Work at this time, to exhort you to Charity; proper both to the Nature of this holy Feast, and to the

original Institution of this Solemnity ; and it may reasonably be hoped, that the annual Returns of it, wherein all the Arguments to Charity are so earnestly pressed on you, should keep this divine Fire always burning and glowing in your Breasts. You have so often heard all the Arguments to Charity, that it is impossible you should forget them ; and there is one that is worth all the rest, which no Christian can forget, who remembers that there is a Heaven and a Hell ; and which no Christian can resist, without despising his Soul, and eternal Life and Death ; and that is, that Heaven is the Reward of Charity ; that Hell is the Punishment of Uncharitableness ; which is so plainly and expressly taught, and so frequently repeated by our Saviour, that it is as certain and unavoidable, as that there is a Heaven and a Hell ; and if Heaven be not a sufficient Encouragement to Charity, nor Hell sufficient to deter us from Uncharitableness, it is to no Purpose to use any other Arguments, which can never persuade, if these can't ; or if they could, would neither carry us to Heaven, nor keep us out of Hell ; for to be charitable only for temporal Reasons, is to give our Goods to feed the Poor, without a true divine Charity ; which *St. Paul* tells us, will profit nothing, *1 Cor. xiii.* For such a Charity as does not raise us above this World, can neither carry us to Heaven, nor keep us out of Hell. And therefore instead

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stead of drawing together all the Arguments for Charity, which you have so often heard, and shewing them in a new Dress, my Design at present is to recommend to you a very excellent, but a very neglected Part of Charity, which our Saviour presses on us in my Text, *viz.* The Charity of Lending, *do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again.*

In speaking to which Words, I shall

- I. Shew you what this Duty is.
- II. What an excellent Charity it is to lend.
And how this may be improved to the most excellent Purposes.

I. What this Duty is, or what our Saviour means by *lending, hoping for nothing again.* And it can signify but two Things; and I see no Reason to think, but that our Saviour might mean both. 1. To lend, without hoping for any Increase; or to lend freely, without Usury. 2. To lend, where the very Principal may be in Danger, when we have little Reason to hope that we shall ever see our own again.

1. To lend freely, without Usury; for our Saviour commands this, as an Act of Charity, *Do good, and lend:* And though to lend, even upon Usury, may in many Cases prove a great Kindness to the Borrower, yet Charity is not the Motive of the Lender; it is not

Charity, but Traffic and Merchandize of Money: and though the *Jews* were expressely forbid to lend their Brethren upon Usury, yet our Saviour intimates there was something like this, and equivalent to it, which spoiled the Charity of lending, even without Usury; that they would not lend to the Poor; who though they should repay them what they borrowed, yet were never likely to be in a Condition to lend to them again; but they would lend to the Rich, from whom they expected the like Returns of Kindness; as you may see in the Verses before my Text; 33, 34. *And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them, of whom ye hope to receive, (not only your own, but the like Kindness of lending to you when your Occasions require it) what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again; τα ἴσα, equal Returns of Kindness; which if it be not Usury of Money, is Usury of Kindnesses, but is not Charity; like inviting our rich Friends and Neighbours to a Feast, who can invite us again; though it be no Fault, is no Charity; for that consists in entertaining the Poor, who can make us no Return. Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14. And thus our Saviour exhorts us here, But do you do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; neither for Usury, nor for such Returns and Exchanges of Kindness.*

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It was for the sake of this Duty, that Usury was so strictly forbidden by the *Jewish* Law, that Men might the more freely lend their Money to those who wanted, when they had no present Use for it themselves; and had no way to increase it; and as far as the Reason and Charity of this Law extends, so far it still obliges, and so far Usury is still forbid to Christians.

This is not well considered by those who so universally condemn all Usury; and because the right understanding of this will be of great Use to settle some Mens Minds, and to explain and inforce this Duty of Lending, which I now recommend to you, it cannot be thought a Digression from my present Design, to give you the true but short State of this Matter.

It is confessed on all Hands, that Usury is forbid by the Law of *Moses*; but the great Mistake is concerning the Nature of Usury, or what that is which the Law forbids and condemns by the Name of Usury.

Some think that all Increase of Money, when Men lend a Sum of Money to receive the Principal again with Interest, is the Usury which the Law forbids; and therefore that this is absolutely unlawful in all Cases, and in all Degrees; though we all know, that Trade, to which we owe all the Riches and Greatness of our Nation, and so many excellent Charities too, cannot be main-

tained without it: That some Men, who now live comfortably in the World, maintain their Families with Credit and Reputation, and do many Acts of Charity themselves, could not trade at all; others could not drive such flourishing and spreading Trades without borrowed Money, nor borrow without Interest: That many Widows and Orphans are maintained by Interest, who must in a few Years be Beggars, had they no other way to live, but to spend the Principal. This is so contrary to the Sense and Reason of Mankind, and to all the Rules of Justice and Charity, and so impracticable in the present State of the World, that while it is possible to put any other Sense upon the Law, I would never think of this. And the Comfort is, that the Law expounds itself otherwise, and gives no Colour for such an Interpretation as this, that all Increase of Money is forbid by it.

For, First, The Law itself allowed the *Jews* to take Usury of Strangers of other Countries, though not of their Brethren, or natural *Jews*, Deut. xxiii. 20. *Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury.* And therefore God did not absolutely forbid the *Jews* to increase their Money, for they might lend to strangers upon Usury; which proves, that this was not an universal Law to them, much less is it so to all Mankind. And that proves, that

that there is no moral and intrinsic Evil in Usury; for if all Usury had in its own Nature been unlawful, God could not have allowed the *Jews* to take Usury of Strangers; for he cannot allow the least moral Evil. The Truth is, I never could yet see the least Shadow of an Argument to prove, that Usury is evil in its Nature, unless, that Money can't beget Money, be thought an Argument; but that is as good an Argument against buying Corn or Wine, or any thing else with Money; for it is unnatural for Money to beget Corn or Wine: But if the barren Nature of Money, that it cannot naturally propagate itself, be a Reason against Usury of Money, this is no Reason against Usury of Corn, which is equally forbid: For it is natural for Corn to propagate its Kind, and multiply itself; and yet the Usury of all Victuals is as much forbid, as the Usury of Money, *Deut.* xxiii. 19. Now if Usury be not morally evil, it can be unlawful to none, but those to whom God has forbid it; and there being no Prohibition of it in the New Testament, which is the Law of the Christian Church, it cannot be unlawful to Christians, whatever it was to the *Jews*.

2. And yet the *Jews* themselves were not expressly forbid, however they might understand it, to lend their Money upon Usury, to all their own Brethren, but only to the Poor: So that had any rich *Jew* come to borrow

borrow Money of them, for any thing that appears by the Law, they might have lent Money to him upon Usury. This Observation will clear this whole Matter; and therefore I shall turn you to all the Texts of the Law, which forbid Usury, and the reading of them will convince you, that Usury was forbid only in favour of the Poor.

The first Text is, *Exod. xxii. 25. If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury: Where no Usury is forbid, but only lending to the Poor upon Usury. Thus Lev. xxv. 35, 36, 37. And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen to decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him.—Take thou no usury of him, nor increase, but fear God, that thy brother may live well with thee: Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.* It is true, in the Repetition of this Law, *Deut. xxiii. 19, 20.* it is only said, *Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother, usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury. Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury, but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury, that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand unto, in the land whither thou goest to possess.* This seems to forbid lending upon Usury to any Jew, whether rich or poor: But this being only a Repetition of those Laws in *Exodus* and *Leviti-*

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Leviticus, in all Reason must be expounded by them; and though the Poor are not expressed, the Circumstances of the Place prove, that they only are meant; for though rich Men may sometimes have occasion to borrow Money, yet none but the Poor, who have no Money to buy, can ever have occasion to borrow Victuals upon Usury; and the Difference the Law makes between a Brother and a Stranger shews, that it is intended as an Act of Charity, which they owe to their Brethren, though not to Strangers. For which Reason also they were forbid to make any of their Brethren Bond-men, though they might buy the Children of the Heathen and Strangers for Bond-men and Bond-maids, *Levit. xxv. 39, &c.* and the Blessing God promises shews, that it is the Reward of Charity.

In other Places, where Usury is mentioned, some Circumstance or other determines it to the Poor. This was the Case, when *Nehemiah* reproved the Nobles and the Rulers for exacting Usury, *Nehem. v.* When the Prophet *Isaiah* threatens great Desolations against the Land, he thus describes it, *And it shall be as with the people, so with the priest—as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him,* *Isa. xxiv. 2.* That is, the Lender and the Usurer shall be reduced to the same Distress and Poverty, as those suffer who borrow upon Usury; which shews, that none but poor
Men

Men used to borrow upon Usury in those Days. Thus when the Prophet *Jeremiah* complains, *Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast born me a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth: I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury, yet every one of them doth curse me*, Jer. xv. 10. It plainly intimates, that Usury is such an Oppression of the Poor, as both deserves and very often procures Curses; and therefore the Prophet *Ezekiel* joins Usury with the Oppression of the Poor, and other Acts of Violence, *Ezek. xviii. 7, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17. He who hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase, he shall die. But he that hath neither oppressed the poor, nor hath withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and clothed the naked with a garment, that hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, he shall live.* Which makes it very plain, what is meant by Usury, when to take Usury is joined with Violence and Oppression of the Poor; and to lend without Usury is reckoned among Acts of great Charity and Goodness.

There is but one Place more, as I remember, that mentions Usury, *Psal. xv. 5.* and there putting forth Money to Usury is joined with taking a Reward against the Innocent,

nocent, which shews, that it was an Act of Violence and Oppression. For indeed among the *Jews*, who were no Merchants, nor maintained any foreign Trade with other Nations, no Men had occasion to borrow Money, much less Victuals, but to supply their present Wants, and to take advantage of the Necessities of the Poor, to increase their own Fortunes by increasing their Poverty, was against all the Laws of Goodness and Charity; and therefore this Usury which was the only Usury known in those Days, is strictly forbid, as all other Acts of Oppression are. All other kinds of Usury are introduced by Trade and Commerce; and though it is against Charity to lend upon Usury to Men, who borrow to supply their Wants, yet if Men borrow to increase their Trade and Fortunes, there is Justice and Equity in it, that the Lender shall make some Increase of his Money, as well as the Borrower. This is not properly Usury, but Traffick and Commerce; and I know no Reason, why Men may not trade with Money, as well as with other Commodities.

And this I take to be the true Reason, why the *Jews* were permitted to take Usury of Strangers, but not of their Brethren, because their Heathen Neighbours were Merchants, as is plain of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, *Isai.* xxiii. They improved their Money by Trade, and therefore it was fit they should pay Interest

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terest for it; especially if they were to lend upon Usury only to such Strangers as came among them for Trade, but did not dwell and sojourn with them; which seems probable from *Levit. xxv. 35.* where the Stranger that sojourns with them seems to be intitled to the like Charity as a Brother. *If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen to decay, thou shalt relieve him; yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner, that he may live with thee; take thou no usury of him; nor increase.* For a Stranger never signifies a Profelyte of Justice, who by Circumcision was incorporated into the Body of *Israel*, made a Brother, and intitled to the Privileges of a natural Jew, but only a Profelyte of the Gate, who renounced Idolatry, but did not undertake the Observation of the Law of *Moses*; and yet they were not to take Usury of these Strangers if they were poor, no more than of their Brother, according to that Law, *Exod. xxii. 21. Thou shalt not vex a stranger, nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Ægypt.*

The Answer our Saviour gives to the Servant who hid his Talent in the Napkin, seems to justify this Account, unless we can suppose, that his Lord would have been pleased with unjust and wicked Gain. *Matth. xxv. 27. Thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.* So that though
it

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it was unlawful to lend Money upon Usury to the Poor, it was not so to the Exchangers, who traded in Money. And our Saviour's driving the Money-Changers out of the Temple, no more proves that he disallowed that Profession, than that he disallowed selling Oxen, and Sheep, and Doves for Sacrifice, for he drove them out also; the Fault was not in the Merchandize no more of Money, than of Sheep, or Oxen, or Doves, but they made *his Father's house, a house of merchandize*, John ii. 14, 15, &c.

It is certain the ancient Fathers, who were professed Enemies to Usury, opposed it under this Notion; for their great Arguments against Usury, are levelled against Uncharitableness and Oppression of the Poor, as appears from *Gregor. Nyssen, St. Ambrose, St. Basil*, and others; and yet it is no Wonder, should we meet with some Passages in them against Usury, considered as Trading, and Merchandize of Money: For it is well known, that they were not much greater Friends to Trade and Merchandize, than they were to Usury, which they thought unbecoming a Christian, as ministring only to Covetousness and Luxury. And yet I suppose, the greatest Enemies at this Day to Usury, will not carry the Quarrel so far, as to condemn Merchandize. And yet under this Notion of Covetousness and sordid Gain (which is equally applica-

applicable to all Trade) Usury is forbid the Clergy by the seventeenth Canon of the first Council of *Nice*; but no Council ever forbid it to the Laity, or threatned Church Censures against them for it, which they would certainly have done, had they thought it evil in itself.

This may satisfy us in what Sense Usury is forbid, both by the Law of *Moses* and the ancient Writers of the Christian Church, viz. as contrary to Charity; when we lend upon Usury, where Charity requires us to lend freely: When we take Increase of the Poor, who borrow to supply their Wants, and sink them still more irrecoverably into Poverty by such Exactions; this always was, and always will be hateful to God, and to all good Men: And yet such detestable Usurers there are among us, who grow rich upon the Ruins and Spoils of the Poor, and drink the Tears of Widows and Orphans; but when to lend without Usury is no Charity, and to take Usury is no Oppression, there Usury itself is no Crime.

And hence we learn (which is the great Thing I aimed at) that Usury was forbid only for the sake of Lending; which proves, that to lend freely to the Poor, is a great and necessary Act of Charity: Though a Man never took a Penny for Usury in his Life, yet if he neither gives nor lends to the Poor, he is guilty

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guilty of all that Uncharitableness, for which Usury is condemned; nay, in most Cases, even these worst sort of Usurers are the more charitable Men: For excepting some very hard Cases, it is greater Charity to lend even to the Poor for Usury, than not to lend at all.

For this Reason the Emperor *Leo* was forced by a new Constitution to permit Usury, which his Father out of a pious Zeal had wholly forbid, because he found, that when Men were forbid to take any Usury, they would not lend at all, which was a greater Hardship to the Poor than Usury itself.

Merely not to take Usury is no Virtue; but to lend to the Poor without Usury is. To lock up our Money in our Chests to rust and canker, and to do no good with it, is what *St. James* so severely threatens rich Men for, *Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries, which shall come upon you; your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and your silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you; a Witness of your Covetousness and Uncharitableness, that you have done no good with it, but hoarded it up to rust and canker for want of Use. James v. 1, 2, 3.*

This Controversy then may be stated and decided in a few Words. Usury is a very

great Sin, that is, to lend our Money upon Usury to those who borrow for Necessity and Want, and to exact such Payments with Rigour and Severity, to strip such miserable People of that little that remains, to imprison their Persons, and make them end their Lives in a Jail. To lock up our Money, and do no good with it, is to hide our Talent in a Napkin; for Money is improveable, and must be improved, either for Charity or Increase, to be a new and perpetual Spring of Charity. To declaim against Usury, and not to exhort Men to lend to the Poor without Usury, is to mistake or overlook the true End and Design of the Law, and to betray uncharitable Men to a greater Evil than Usury itself; but if Men lend freely to the Poor in such Proportions as Charity requires, they may very innocently and virtuously, without transgressing this Law against Usury, lend their Money for Increase to the Rich.

Secondly, But our Saviour seems to mean something more by *lending, hoping for nothing again*, not only to lend freely without Usury, but to lend, where the Principal may be in danger, when we cannot reasonably promise ourselves to receive our own again. No Man can deny, but this is great Charity; but then this must be conducted by the Measures and Proportions of giving: What Charity will oblige us to give, it will as reasonably oblige

us to lend; but where the Return is very hazardous, it can oblige us to lend no more than what it would become us to give; and yet in such Cases, Lending may be a greater Charity than Giving, which is the second Thing proposed, which I can speak but briefly to.

II. The Excellency and Advantages of this Charity of Lending, and how it may be improved to the best Purpose.

Now if we compare Giving and Lending together, Lending has much the Advantage of Giving, as to the true End and Purposes of Charity.

To lend is a greater Obligation to Industry, than to give; and there cannot be a greater Kindness done to the Poor, next to keeping them from starving, than to teach them Industry. I need not tell you, that there are many Poor, who will never work, while they can meet with charitable People to give; nay, who choose to be sick, to be lame, to be blind, to move Charity, rather than work to supply their Wants; but when Men have nothing to live on, but the Improvement of lent Money, which they know they must repay when it is called for, this must make them industrious; for it both encourages their Industry, and keeps the Rod over them; especially were this made a standing Rule, to give nothing to those who

are able, but will not work, who have a Stock lent them to trade with, and neglect to improve it.

Thus what we give does but one single Act of Charity, for we can give it but once; but what we lend may circulate, as the Blood does in our Veins, and communicate Warmth and Spirits to more Parts of the Body than one: That is, what we lend, may be lent again, and do a great many successive Charities, as great, or greater, than that one single Charity had been, if we had given it: And that certainly is one of the greatest and noblest Charities which is most diffusive.

But yet, to make this Charity of Lending the more effectual, it must be confessed, that a public Bank of Charity raised out of such free Loans, will have many Advantages above any private Acts of this Nature; and I can by no means think this either impracticable or difficult.

I doubt not but most of this honourable Assembly could contrive very advantageous Ways of doing this, were Men but charitably disposed. For suppose you should make your Hospitals, or your Companies, such public Banks; or if it could be more public, still the more useful, and the more secure; where charitable People may safely deposit their Money without Use; or those who cannot

spare

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spare the whole Interest, may abate some Part of it; and where the running Cash may be lodged, which Men expect no Interest for; this might easily rise to a very vast Sum, which with wise Improvement would make a sure and lasting Fund of Charity.

And could any thing in the World be more easy than this, which no Man could feel? What would it be to a rich Man, who has many Thousands employed in Trade, or secured at Interest; or if he knows when he has enough, has no need to increase it, to drop some Thousands into such a free Bank, to sanctify and prosper his Trade, and other Ways of Gain, and to secure a Blessing to his Posterity? How many others are there, who could spare a hundred, or it may be some hundred Pounds out of their Stock, and not feel the want of Interest; or at least, if they could not spare the whole Interest, might spare the half, or a third Part of it? How many are there, who have some Hundreds by them useless, which they would not and could not with any Reason grudge to lay up in a safe Bank? How many are there, who would easily be persuaded to lend, were there such a safe Bank to receive it, who are very unwilling to give? And were there such a Bank of Charity once settled, there would be very little need of Giving.

For I know not any kind of Charity, but might be provided for in this Way, were Men but free and liberal in Lending. It would enlarge your Hospitals, clear your Streets of Beggars, the great Reproach of this City; maintain those who can't work, and employ those who can; put poor Children to Apprentices, provide Stocks for ingenious and industrious young Men, who want them; redeem Prisoners, and, which Justice and Honour requires of you, as far as possibly you can, may in some measure provide a Fund for your Orphans.

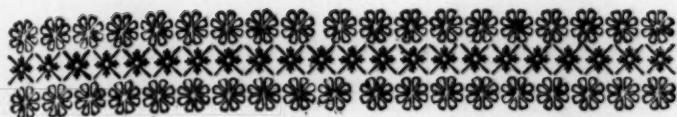
This would advance the Glory of this great City, it would perpetuate and consecrate the Memory of such worthy Persons, as would begin and promote such a lasting and extensive Charity; the Children which are unborn, would rise up and call them blessed; it would draw a great Share of the charitable Money of the Nation into your Hands, which would quicken Trade, and increase your Riches; and above all, it would procure all the great Rewards which are promised to Charity, both in this World and in the next.

But whatever becomes of this Proposal, you must always remember, that it is great Charity to lend as well as to give: This is what our Saviour expects from us; this is what he commands, *To do good, and lend,*
hoping

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hoping for nothing again; and if out of a greedy Desire of Gain, we will lend nothing freely to the Relief and Encouragement of the industrious Poor, this will make all our other Usury and Increase, which is lawful and innocent in itself, when it neither oppresses the Poor, nor stops our Charity, to become Sin.





S E R M O N VI.

Preached before the Queen at *White-*
hall, June 26, 1692.

PROV. xviii. 14.

*The spirit of a man will sustain his
infirmity : but a wounded spirit who
can bear ?*



THE great Objection against Provi-
dence, is taken from the many
Evils and Calamities which Man-
kind suffer ; which would be a
reasonable Objection, were they more than
are deserved, or more than are necessary for the
wise Government of the World. But besides
other Answers that may be given to it, the
Wiseman's Observation in my Text furnishes
us with Two very plain Answers. 1st, That
the Sufferings of this Life are not dispropor-
tioned to our Strength to bear them ; and
when Afflictions and Misfortunes are neces-
sary

fary to the wise Government of the World, it is a sufficient Vindication of Providence, that God lays no more on us, than what the Spirit of a Man can bear ; *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities.* And 2dly, That the only Evils that are intolerable and insupportable, are wholly owing to ourselves ; and then we have no Reason to quarrel at the divine Providence, when God is more merciful to us than we are to ourselves. *But a wounded spirit who can bear ?*

For the Explication and Improvement of these Words, I shall,

- I. Inquire what is meant by sustaining Infirmities.
- II. By what means the Spirit of a Man can sustain his Infirmities.
- III. What is meant by a wounded Spirit.
- IV. How unsupportable a wounded Spirit is.
- V. Conclude with some practical Inferences from the Whole.

I. What is meant by sustaining Infirmities. Now Infirmities in this Place, being opposed to a wounded Spirit, must signify only external Sufferings, whatever is grievous and afflicting, excepting the Disorders and Troubles of our own Minds. And by sustaining Infirmities is not meant, that we must not feel them, nor have any afflicting Sense of them ; for the Stoics themselves would not say, that Pain was not Pain ;

Pain; for then there would be no need of Patience to bear it; but that Patience, if there be any such thing, can conquer Pain*. And therefore, to sustain Infirmities, is to feel, but not to sink under the Weight of them; as that Man sustains his Burden, who can go upright, and not stagger, at least not fall, though he feels the Weight of it on his Shoulders. That is, he who can in any measure enjoy himself under Suffering, does so far sustain it; and the more perfectly we can enjoy ourselves, though the Brightness and Gaiety of our Spirits may be a little sullied and overcast, the more complete and perfect is our Conquest over all the Calamities of Life.

II. But the great Inquiry is, How the Spirit of a Man can sustain his Infirmities? And that is done three Ways: 1. By natural Courage, and Strength of Mind. 2. By the Powers of Reason. 3. By the diviner Aids and Succours of Religion.

1st, Natural Courage, and Strength of Mind: A Man of Spirit thinks it a Reproach to be easily disturbed and ruffled, to be put out of Humour by every Accident, to sink under the common Calamities of Life; nay, to be wholly mastered by the most extraordinary and formidable Events. There is an inbred Greatness in human Nature, which does not

* *Non ego dolorem, dolorem esse nego, cur enim fortitudo desideratur; sed eum opprimi dico patientia, si modo est aliqua patientia.*
Cicer.

care to confess its own Weakness, which will not yield, or submit, or own a Conquest; an untaught Courage, which supports the rude and illiterate Part of Mankind, even without Reason and Discourse; which is improved by a Sense of Honour in Men of Fortune, increases by Exercise and Discipline, by hard Labour, and difficult Trials, and is lost by Ease, and Luxury, and Softness, which makes the Mind as tender as the Body, to feel all the Vicissitudes of Fortune, as a crazy and distempered Body does the Change of Weather. God has put a Spirit into Man which can bear his Infirmary; and if we have it not, it is our own Fault.

2dly, The Spirit of a Man sustains his Infirmities by the Power of Reason, which adds to our natural Courage, gives us a more confirmed Sense of Decency and Honour, teaches us the true Value of Things, quiets our Passions, undeceives our abused Imaginations, convinces us that some fancied Evils are none at all, others not so great as we thought, and that the worst Condition has its Allays, which make it tolerable to a wise and good Man.

I am far from thinking, that the mere Power of natural Reason, and moral Arguments, is able to support us under all Events; much less, that the Arguments of the heathen Philosophers, though they said a great many wise and good Things, were sufficient to this Purpose; but yet it is certain, that Reason is
the

the Strength of the Mind, and it is the Mind which must bear up under external Sufferings; and it is as certain, that Nature furnishes us with a great many Arguments to bear them easily without Fainting. As for Instance :

We must consider the State of the World, which is in a continual Flux and Motion, and does not long shew the same Face of Things; that the various Lusts and Passions of Men among whom we live, will create a great deal of Trouble to us; and that our mortal Bodies are liable to Pain and Hunger, and many Calamities. This is the State of all Mankind in this World; and if after all, it be desirable to live, to come into, and to continue in this World, upon these Terms, we must make the best of our Condition, and bear our Sufferings patiently, and not repine, if we escape as well as the Generality of Mankind: In such a State of Life we must not promise to ourselves a complete and undisturbed Happiness; for then we must be disappointed, and be very uneasy and impatient at such a Disappointment; but we must expect to suffer more or less, and that will make us think we escape well, when our Sufferings are but light; and teach us to arm ourselves against those which are greater, with Courage and Patience.

Thus a wise Man sees through the frightful or flattering Disguises of Things, and judges by Nature, not by Fancy and Opinion; and

and then he finds no mighty Reason to be disturbed about many Things which are judged and resented as great Calamities by unthinking Men. Reason teaches them, that Nature is contented with a little, and that poor Men enjoy themselves, and have their Pleasures and Satisfactions as well as the Rich; and therefore Poverty without pressing Wants, is not so great an Evil as it is thought by some Men; and then it can be no intolerable Evil neither, to fall from a high and prosperous Fortune to a meaner State. Reason teaches them, that a good Man, who is conscious to himself of his own Virtue and Integrity, ought not to be concerned for unjust Reproaches, which are the Effects of Ignorance or Malice. That undeserved Honours, unjust Praises and Commendations, are only the Entertainments of Fools; and that unjust Reproaches ought not to put wise Men out of Countenance. And thus it is in other Cases; there is a vast Difference between the Natures of Things, and Mens Opinions; and were our Passions and Resentments governed by Reason, and proportioned to the Nature of Things, not to the Opinions of Men about them, it would make our Condition in this World much more easy and tolerable. But I cannot now particularly shew you all the Variety of Arguments, whereby Men may support themselves under several Calamities of Life; it is sufficient

sufficient to my present Purpose, that Reason gives a new Strength and Vigour to the Spirit of a Man to sustain his Infirmities.

3dly, But the greatest Supports of all, are the Arguments Religion furnishes us with ; as to name but two at present. 1. That whatever we suffer, is not the Effect of a blind Chance, or fatal Necessity, but is ordered by a wise and good Providence. 2. That if we bear our present Sufferings with Patience and Submission to the Will of God, and make a wise Use of them to our Improvement in Grace and Virtue, our very Sufferings shall be greatly rewarded in the next World. These two Principles are the Foundations of all Religion, and as certain as any thing in Religion ; all other Arguments without this Belief, cannot support us, and there are no Sufferings too great for a Man to bear, who is thoroughly possessed with a firm Belief and vigorous Sense of these.

Can we ourselves, or the kindest Friend in the World, choose better for us than God ? Do we suspect his Wisdom, or his Goodness ? Can he mistake our Condition, who knows our Frame ? Can he be wanting in his Care of us, or in Good-will to us, who made us ? What is it we desire, but to be happy ? and if God intends our Happiness in his severest Corrections, why should we complain ? Religion teaches us, that the Care of our Souls is of much greater Concernment to us than
bodily

bodily Ease or Pleasure ; and if God sees Pain and Sickness, Poverty and Disgrace, necessary to cure or restrain our vicious and distempered Passions, or to improve and exercise our Graces, have we any Reason to complain that God takes such severe Methods to save our Souls ? Had we rather be miserable for ever, than suffer some present Want and Pain ? The Soul is the best Part of Man ; and to take care of a Man, is to improve his better Part ; and this is the Design of God's Providence towards particular Men, to train them up to Virtue by such Methods of Kindness or Severity as he sees them want.

This, I confess, may be very grievous and afflicting at present, but then we have the Hopes of immortal Life to support us ; and can that Man be miserable, can he sink under present Sufferings, who has the Hope of immortal Life, *as the anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast ?* To believe that all things at present are intended for our Good, and *shall work together for our good, if we love God ;* and that when we have out-rid the Storms of this World, by Faith, and Patience, and Hope, *these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory :* This, if any thing, will make all the Sufferings of this Life easy : If natural Courage, or natural Reason fail, the Spirit of a Man, supported by Religion, will sustain his Infirmary.

III. Let

III. Let us now consider what is meant by a wounded Spirit: This is a metaphorical Expression, and signifies a Spirit which suffers Pain and Trouble. A Wound in the Body, is a Division of one Part from another, which is always painful; and though a Spirit cannot be thus divided, yet because a Wound causes Pain; a Spirit which is disordered, and suffers Pain, is said to be wounded: As for instance,

Some Mens Spirits are wounded with the Disorders and Violence of their own Passions; they love, or hope, or fear, or desire, or grieve immoderately; and all Passions are very painful, when they are in Excess. Upon this account the Wicked are said to be *like a troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt: there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.*

Other Mens Spirits are wounded with a Sense of Guilt; their own Consciences reproach and shame them, and threaten the Vengeance of God against them; they have gratified their Lust or Revenge, their Ambition or Covetousness; and dreamed of nothing but Ease and Pleasure; the Temptation was very charming as it came towards them, but now the Heat and Impetus is allayed, and the Enjoyment over, they cannot review what they have done, without Horror; their affrighted Consciences draw the most amazing Scenes of Judgment, and paint

their Fancies with all the blackest Images of Terror : *The sinners of Sion are afraid, fear hath surprized the hypocrites. Who shall dwell with devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*

IV. This is the wounded Spirit, and such a wounded Spirit who can bear? This is matter of Sense, and therefore for the Proof of it, we must appeal to the Sense of Mankind ; and there is no Danger in this Appeal ; for though some Men may scorn to confess what they feel, yet if all Mens Minds be of a Make, we can feel in ourselves, what other Men feel : And then we all know, that Anger, when it grows immoderate, and increases into Rage and Fury, worries the Mind, and sharpens itself into such a Keeness, as cuts deep into our own Souls ; that an immoderate Love of Riches, or Honours, or Pleasures, creates us infinite Trouble, torments with an impatient Thirst, with restless and uneasy Expectations, distracts us between Hopes and Fears, kills with Delays and Disappointments ; and there are but few Men, who can long dissemble their inward Pain and Uneasiness, but confess it in their Looks, and Words, and Behaviour, by external and visible Symptoms of Frenzy and Distraction.

And yet all this is nothing to the Agonies of a guilty Mind, as any Man must confess who knows what it is to be self-condemned, and to live under the Apprehensions of God's

Wrath,

Wrath, and the terrible Expectations of endless Torments; for with what Courage and Patience can any Man bear such a Thought as this, that he must be miserable for ever? Some Men may laugh away the Thoughts of Hell, but it is certain, that no Man, who believes in good Earnest, that there is a Hell, and that he himself is in the most apparent Danger of falling into it, can bear this Thought: The many sad Examples of despairing Sinners, who at the last Moment groan out their Souls in Agonies and Horrors, are an undeniable Proof of this. Men who do not believe a Hell, may laugh at it, till they feel it; but for Experiment's sake, let them only suppose that there were a Hell, and that Hell were to be their Portion, and then let them tell me, how they can bear such a Thought.

This is sufficient to satisfy us, how unsupportable a wounded Spirit is; but to give us a deeper and more lasting Sense of it, I shall further observe, that a wounded Spirit has no Refuge or Retreat, has nothing left to support itself with. The Spirit of a Man can bear his Infirmities, but when the Spirit itself is wounded, there is nothing to support that; this wounds our Courage, our Reason, makes all external Comforts tasteless, and deprives us of all the Comforts of Religion.

For, *First*, What Courage can any Man have against himself, against the Wounds

and Disorders of his own Mind ? Courage is nothing else, but a Firmness of Mind to govern its own Resentments and Passions ; to suffer Pain, and Reproach, and other Evils, without immoderate Grief, and to encounter Dangers without an amazing Fear ; but when the Mind itself is oppressed with Grief and Fears and Cares, the Disease, which Courage should prevent, has already seized the Spirits. Courage fortifies us against external Evils, to keep them at a distance from wounding our Spirits ; but the Disorders of our own Passions are inward Wounds, which we must feel and languish under. When our own Consciences reproach, chide, and threaten us, the good Opinion and Courtships of the World cannot defend us from ourselves, we cannot stop our Ears against it, we cannot harden ourselves against its Terrors, it is a domestic Fury, which when it is provoked and awakened, will be heard, and will make us tremble, will make us judge and condemn ourselves, and begin our own Torments in frightful Horrors and Agonies of Mind.

2dly, Whereas Reason can fortify* the Mind against all external Calamities, when our Spirits are wounded, that little Reason we have left, proves our Tormentor, When we are under the Transports of violent and disorderly Passions, Reason cannot be heard, or is bribed by Passion to justify its own Excesses.

Wife

Wife Counfels are loft on fuch Men, as much as a Lecture of Philofophy would be in the Noife and Diftraction of an Alarm or Battle.

What a fullen and obftinate thing is Grief! how does it pore on its own Misfortune, nourifh its Difafe, and defpife all Arts of Diverfion, that it is commonly above the Cure of any thing but Time, which weakens the Impreffion, or tires Men with their own Complaints!

When our Confcienfes are wounded with Guilt, this arms all the Reafon we have againft us, for Reafon in fuch Cafes can never be on our Side; then Reafon discovers our Shame and Danger, aggravates our Sins, and many times drives fuch awakened Sinners into the very Horrors of Defpair, difputes againft the Poffibility of their Pardon, and blots their Names out of all the Promifes of the Gospel, how large and univerfal foever they be. The Guides of Souls, who are always confulted upon fuch Occafions, (how much foever they are defpifed at other times) could tell a great many fad Stories of this kind, enough to convince Sinners, that even Wit and Reafon is a very dangerous Enemy, when a guilty Confcience turns the Edge of it againft ourfelves.

3dly, When there is no Eafe and Comfort within, there is no other Remedy, but to feek for Support and Comfort from abroad; and there are a great many pretty Diverfions

150 *A wounded Spirit an*

in the World to entertain Men, who are at leisure to attend them, but these are no Entertainments to a wounded Spirit. When Men are galled by their own Passions, by Fear, Emulation, Jealousy, Discontent, in the *very midst of laughter the heart is sorrowful*. As great as *Haman* was, all his Riches and Power availed him nothing, while he saw *Mordecai* the Jew sitting at the King's Gate, *Esth. v. 13*.

The good Things of this World are very considerable, when there is an easy and cheerful Mind to enjoy them; but they cannot make a Man easy and happy, whose Mind is disturbed; they may entertain an easy Mind, but cannot quiet the Tumults and Disorders of Passions, nor give any Ease to a wounded Spirit.

Much less can external Things appease the Horrors of a guilty Conscience. Away all ye vain Delights, will such a Man say, what have I to do with Pleasure, when Torments, everlasting Torments, must be my Portion. Why do you tell me of Riches and Honours, when the great God is my Enemy, when I am despised and abhorred of my Maker, and am thought worthy of no better Portion than eternal Flames? I am not at leisure to attend the flattering Courtships of this World; my Thoughts are taken up with a more dreadful Prospect of Things to come. O
Eternity!

Eternity ! Eternity ! the never-dying Worm,
the never-dying Death !

4thly, Nor can a wounded Spirit find any Support from the Considerations of Religion, unless it find its Cure there. If the Belief of a divine Providence and another World can cure our Love to present Things, it will give us quiet and easy Passions too ; but without this, a wounded and distempered Spirit will reproach God as well as Men, and rage against Heaven itself ; like that wicked King, *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait on the Lord any longer ?* As Solomon observes, *The foolishness of man perverteth his ways, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.*

If the Fear of God, and of those Punishments he has threatened against Sin, makes true and sincere Penitents, conquers our vicious Habits, and reforms our Lives, this is such a wounded Spirit as God will bind up again, such a *broken and contrite heart* as God *will not despise* ; but the Thoughts of God and of a future Judgment are very terrible to impenitent Sinners. It is a dreadful Prospect to look into the other World, and to see those Lakes of Fire and Brimstone, *prepared for the devil and his angels.* And this is all that bad Men can see in the next World.

V. Thus we see how supportable all external Evils and Calamities are, how insupportable a wounded Spirit is ; and the comparing these

two Cases will suggest some very useful Thoughts to us.

As, *First*, This is a great Vindication of the Providence of God, with respect to those Evils and Calamities that are in the World. Sufferings are very necessary in this corrupt and degenerate State of Mankind; but though God sees it necessary to punish Sinners, yet he has made abundant Provision to support us under all external Sufferings: He inflicts nothing on us, but what the Spirit of a Man can sustain, and support itself under; but our greatest Sufferings are owing to ourselves, and no more chargeable on the Providence of God than our Sins are. Nothing that is external can hurt us, while our Minds are sound and healthful; but it is only a disordered or guilty Mind which gives a Sting to Afflictions: God corrects in measure, as we are able to bear; but we ourselves tie the Knots, or add the Scorpions to the Scourge.

Secondly, This greatly recommends the divine Wisdom, in that Provision God has made for our Support under Sufferings.

As, 1. Since the Generality of Mankind were not likely to prove any great Philosophers, God hath bestowed on them such a Measure of natural Courage as will bear Afflictions better than the Reason and Philosophy of more thinking Men; and we may generally observe, that those who make the least Use of their Reason, and have the least
Share

Share of external Comforts, have the greatest Portion of this untaught Courage, because they need it most.

2. God has provided the greatest Supports for the best Men. Those who use their Reason, and examine the Nature of Things, will more easily bear Poverty and Disgrace, and such other Evils, than Men who judge by Opinion and popular Mistakes.

Those who live by Reason, and govern their sensual Appetites and Inclinations, and use the Things of this World, so as not to be mastered by them, retain that Courage and Strength of Mind which is lost by Softness and Effeminacy.

But a truly devout Man, who believes the Wisdom and Goodness of Providence, and the Rewards of the next Life, has the greatest Support of all. Whereas an impenitent Sinner, who wounds his Conscience with Guilt, and an Atheist, who believes neither a God nor a Providence, have nothing but Sottishness and Stupidity to support them; and could Things be better ordered for the Encouragement of Virtue and Religion? Good Men, whatever their Condition be, have the Advantage of the Wicked, even as to this present Life; they may be easy, and enjoy themselves in all Conditions, for God has provided for their present Support; but if bad Men be Sufferers, they have nothing to support them; and though they be prosperous,

rous, they feel such Disorders of Passions, or such guilty Fears, as sour all their other Enjoyments.

3. God has so wisely ordered Things, that we cannot support ourselves under Sufferings, without making a wise and good Use of them ; for the best Arguments to comfort us under Sufferings will afford us no Comfort, unless they make us better. It is a great Comfort that Afflictions are appointed by a wise and good God : But he who considers this, will naturally inquire into the Reason why God strikes, *will search and try his way, and turn unto the Lord ; will bear the rod, and who it is that hath appointed it.*

That Afflictions are ordered for our Good, will make us endeavour to reap the spiritual Benefit of them ; for that Afflictions are useful, is no Comfort at all, unless we make a wise Use of them ; unless they bring forth the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness.

No Man can take Comfort in the Rewards of the next World, without bearing his Sufferings well in this ; for our Sufferings will have no Reward, unless they make us better ; unless they purify our Minds, and exercise our Faith, and Patience, and Submission to the Will of God.

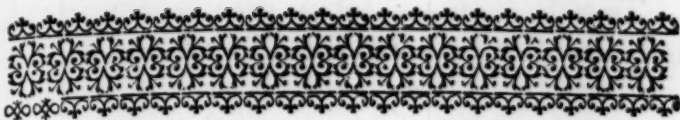
3^{dly}, I observe, that it is better to suffer than to sin, even with respect to our present Ease, because Sufferings may be borne by an innocent and virtuous Mind, but Guilt in-
flicts

inflicts an unsupportable Wound upon the Spirit; and those Sufferings which the Spirit of a Man can bear, are rather to be chosen than what the Spirit of a Man cannot bear.

Lastly, I observe, that the Government of our own Passions contributes more to our Happiness than any external Enjoyments. While our Minds are disordered with violent and tumultuous Passions, we can never be easy and happy, whatever else we enjoy; for this gives such a Wound to the Spirits, as no external Enjoyments can heal. But he who has his Passions under government, who knows how to love and fear, desire and hope, though he may be a great Sufferer, can never be miserable, because he can support himself under all other Sufferings. What a wrong Course then do the Generality of Mankind take to make themselves happy! They seek for Happiness without, when the Foundation of Happiness must be laid within, in the Temper and Disposition of our Minds. An easy quiet Mind will weather all the Storms of Fortune; but how calm and serene soever the Heavens be, there is no Peace to the Wicked, who have nothing but Noise and Tumult and Confusion within.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever. Amen.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY
JOHN HUTCHINGS
OF THE BARRISTER AT LAW
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE
IN NEW ENGLAND
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME THE SECOND
BOSTON: PRINTED BY S. KNEELAND, AT THE SIGN OF THE ANCHOR, IN THE MARKET PLACE.
1780.



S E R M O N VII.

Preached at the Funeral of the Reverend *Richard Meggot*, D. D. and late Dean of *Winchester*, December the 10th, 1692. at *Twickenham*.

PHIL. i. 23, 24.

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

ST. Paul wrote this Epistle to *Philippi* from *Rome*, where he was in Bonds for the Gospel; but though his Body was confined to a Prison, his Soul, his great divine Soul, was at liberty to visit the Churches he had planted, to advise and counsel and comfort them, to increase their Knowledge, and to confirm their Faith, to inflame their Zeal, and to spur them forward to more perfect Attainments in all Piety and Virtue.

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The *Philippians* seem greatly concerned lest the Progress of the Gospel should be hindered by St. Paul's Imprisonment, and lest they and the whole Church should be deprived of the Labours and Ministry of so great an Apostle, should this Persecution extend to Life, as they had reason to fear it would.

As for the first, St. Paul assures them, that his Bonds were for the Furtherance of the Gospel; for his Imprisonment was taken notice of both in the Court and City, which made Men curious to know, what that Doctrine was which he preached, and for which he suffered Bonds; and this published the Gospel more effectually than his Preaching could have done, *ver. 12, 13, &c.*

As for the second, he tells them, he was no farther concerned either about Life or Death, but that Christ might be *magnified in his body*. If he lived, his Life was wholly devoted to the Service of Christ and of his Church; if he died, it would be for his own great Advantage. *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, ver. 20, 21.* And this made it a hard Choice to him, whether he should desire to live or die: Whether he should get rid of his Bonds, and make his Escape out of a troublesome World into the Regions of Ease and Rest, to reap the Fruit of his Labours here in the eternal Enjoyment of his Lord, whom he had so faithfully served; or
whether

whether he should live to encounter with a thousand Difficulties and Deaths, in the Service of Christ, and of the Souls of Men. *What I should choose I wot not : for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better : nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.*

Was there ever such a Dispute as this before, that a Man, who was as certain to go to Heaven as he was to die, who had himself been snatched up into the third Heavens, and had his Mind possessed with strong and vigorous and lively Idea's of the Glories of that Place, who had seen and heard such Things as could not be expressed, who saw a Crown, a glorious immarcessible Crown prepared for him ; I say, that such a Man should make any Question what he should choose, whether immediately to take possession of this Crown and Kingdom, or to live longer in this World to suffer Bonds and Imprisonments, Hunger, and Cold, and Stripes, and all the ill Usage which he had so often met with, for no other Reason but still to preach the Gospel, and to enlarge the Borders of Christ's Church. What a Contempt is this, not only of the little Pleasures and Satisfactions, but even of all the Miseries of Life ! What a Triumph is this over the World, over all the Frowns and Terrors of it ? What a Triumph is this over Self ! Such a Degree
of

of Self-denial as the Gospel itself does not command, which is in some sense to deny Heaven, to deny all the Joys of Christ's Presence, for the sake of doing good! For it is to delay, to put off Heaven, to adjourn his own Happiness, that he may live the longer to serve his great Master, though with great Difficulties and Labours. What Love was this to his Lord! What Love was this to the Souls of Men! It is certainly the most perfect Imitation of the Love of Christ, that is possible to Man; Christ so loved us, as to come down from Heaven to live a laborious Life, and to die an accursed Death for us; this great Apostle so loved his Lord, and so loved the Souls of Men, that he made it his Choice to stay some time out of Heaven, and to encounter all the Miseries and Terrors of this Life, to serve Christ and his Church. Where is this divine Spirit now to be found! Let us, my beloved Brethren, who are intrusted also with the Care of Souls by the *great shepherd and bishop of our souls*, blush to think how far short we fall of this Example: Let this inspire us with a flaming Love and Zeal for the Souls of Men, for whom Christ died, and make us at least contented to deny ourselves some of the Ease and Security and Pleasures of Life, to serve the Church of Christ, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.

But

But to keep myself within some Bounds, I shall briefly discourse on these two Heads, which are very proper for this Occasion, and very proper to my Text.

I. The great Rewards of faithful Pastors and Ministers of Christ, and how much it is for their Advantage to be removed out of this World. *St. Paul was very sensible of this, which made him desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

II. How necessary the Lives of such Men are to the Church, and what a great Loss it is, when God removes them out of it. *Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.*

I. Let us then consider in the first Place the great Rewards of the faithful Ministers of Christ, and how much it is for their Advantage *to depart and to be with Christ*. Now I do not here intend a Comparison between Heaven and Earth: Good God! What different Things are these! And what Christian doubts, whether Heaven be a happier Place than this World! Heaven! Whither no Troubles or Sorrows can follow us; no persecuting Sword, no persecuting Tongue: Where we shall be delivered from all the Wants, Necessities, and Infirmities of the Body, from

Hunger and Cold and Nakedness, from wracking Pains and languishing Sicknesſes ; where there is eternal Eaſe and Reſt and Joy, without Labour, without Diſcontents, without Quarrels ; where our Souls ſhall be perfected in Knowledge and in Love ; where we ſhall dwell in the Preſence of God, ſee him as he is, and know him even as we are known ; where we ſhall dwell with Chriſt, adore his Love, behold his Glory, and be transformed ourſelves into the Likeneſs and Image of his Glory. We have but obſcure imperfect Conceptions of theſe things now ; Heaven will outdo our higheſt Expectations, as much as the moſt perfect State of Happineſs in this World always falls ſhort of what we expected ; and this is the Caſe of all good Men, it is a mighty happy Change they make, when they remove from Earth to Heaven.

But there are different Degrees of Glory in the next World, proportioned not only to our different Attainments in Virtue, but to thoſe different Truſts in Services which we have been employed in, and have faithfully diſcharged here. We read of a Reward of a Prophet, that he who gives a Cup of cold Water to a Prophet in the Name of a Prophet, ſhall have a Prophet's Reward ; which muſt ſignify ſome peculiar Reward that ſhall be beſtowed on Prophets. We know ſo little of the other World, that we cannot conceive what

what these different Rewards shall be : The Prophet *Daniel* represents it by an external Glory, *Dan. xii. 3.* *And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.* But our Saviour represents this by a different Degree of Rule and Empire, *Luke xii. 42, 43, 44.* *And the Lord said, who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due season?* This is the honourable Character of Gospel Ministers in this World, that they are *rulers in God's household*, to instruct and feed them with the Word of Life ; and their Reward is proportioned to their Work : *Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.* *Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.* What this Rule signifies in the other World, is a Mystery to us, especially since we have fancied the other World to be only a State of Contemplation, not of Action, where we shall have nothing to do but to see God, and to love and to praise him, but no Service to do for him ; but we know there are different Orders of Angels, who are employed in great Trusts and Offices, Archangels, Angels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers, which are Names of Rule and Government, though we know not what their Power and Authority is, nor how they govern ; in like manner

our Saviour promises his Apostles, *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*, Matth. xix. 28. The like we may see in the Parable of the Pounds and Talents; he who hath gained ten Pounds had Rule over ten Cities; and he who gained five Pounds had Rule over five Cities: For these Servants to whom the Lord gave these Pounds and Talents to improve, plainly signify his Stewards, and the Ministers of his spiritual Kingdom: For no other Persons have in so peculiar a manner this honourable Character of the Servants of Christ throughout the Gospel. And if there be Order and Government among the Angels themselves, why should we think that there is nothing like this among glorified Saints? If Angels are the Ministers of God, there is no Reason to think that Heaven is a State of mere Rest and Contemplation, especially when Happiness consists in Action. And if Christ have any Ministers of his spiritual Kingdom in the next World, it is most reasonable to think, that those shall have the greatest Authority, and be employed in the noblest Services, who have been his faithful Stewards and Ministers in this World. For the Church on Earth and in Heaven is the same Church, though their State be very different; and

therefore

therefore they do not lose their relation to Christ, nor their Station in his Church, by removing to Heaven. It is a sacerdotal Kingdom, our *Higb-Priest is King*; and therefore a *Priest of Jesus*, how mean soever this be thought now, will be one of the highest Characters in Heaven, What the Happiness of this is, we cannot tell; but we know that there are no empty Titles in Heaven, but every Degree of Dignity there signifies a peculiar Degree of Happiness; and what an advantageous Exchange then is it, for a faithful Minister of Jesus to be removed from Earth to Heaven!

For let us consider what the State of Christ's Ministers is in this World; what it was in St. Paul's Days he tells us, 2 Cor. vi. 4, 10. *In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fasting; by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindnesses, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right-hand and on the left; by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

M 3

Which

Which describes a most laborious Life, a Scene of Wants, of Difficulties, of Sufferings; a perpetual Exercise of passive Virtues, to reconcile the most appearing Contradictions, to live and struggle and contend in this World, and to fetch their Comforts and Supports from Heaven.

This indeed is not always the State of the Christian Church, nor of the Ministers of it; but yet in the greatest external Prosperity of the Church, the Ministers of Religion, who discharged their Trust with Diligence and Faithfulness, find many Difficulties to encounter.

The Care of Mens Souls is itself a mighty Trust; and *who is sufficient for these things?* Consider but the Charge St. Paul gives to Timothy, 1 Epist. iv. 11. &c. *Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity; give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine; neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophesy, by laying on of the hands of the presbytery: meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all; take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* Here is work enough to employ the whole Man, and our utmost Care and Diligence and Prudence; work for the Study,
for

for the Closet, for the Pulpit, as the same Apostle exhorts and charges *Timothy*, to preach the word, to be instant in season, out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine, 2 Tim. iv. 2. But yet though there be Labour and Diligence in this, it would be a delightful Work, were our Labours always blessed with Success; could we rescue the Souls of Men from the Dominion of their Lusts, and from the Power of the Devil; could we turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God; but we must often expect to labour all night, and catch nothing; we must contend with the Lusts and Vices of Men, must bear their Folly, their Frowardness, their Reproaches, and Censures, and Injuries; be thought troublesome, pragmatistical, and Busy-bodies, for our charitable Exhortations and Reproofs, and Watchfulness over their Souls. And when the Church is at ease and rest from without, how often is it rent and torn in pieces with Schisms and Heresies? as St. Paul forewarned *Timothy*, *The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables*, ver. 3, 4. And what infinite Labours and Difficulties does this create to the Ministers of the Gospel, to heal the Breaches of the Church, to confute Heresies,

Atheism, Infidelity, and to be scorned and persecuted for it with a bitter Rage and Zeal? That St. Paul might well add, *But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry,* ver. 5. We ought not indeed to be discouraged by such Difficulties as these, because our Reward will be great in Heaven; but it will be a happy Day when our warfare shall be accomplished, when we shall cease from our labours, and our works shall follow us: When we can say with St. Paul, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.*

II. Thus to die is their gain; *Nevertheless, it is more needful for the Church, that they should abide in the flesh:* And a great Loss it is to the Church, when they die. I need not use many Words about this, for the Case is plain. The Death of every good Man, who is very useful to the World, in what Way soever he be useful, is a very great Loss; for Death puts an end to his doing any more Good in this World: But as to take care of the Souls of Men, is to do the greatest Good to Mankind, because the Happiness of our Souls is of the greatest Concernment to us; so to lose a faithful and a prudent Guide, must be the greatest Loss,

We

We indeed of this Church, have great Reason to bless God, that he has sent forth so many able and painful Labourers into his Harvest, that it is not the Loss of every good Man that can much affect us at ordinary Times : For there are great Numbers of wise and good Men to perpetuate a Succession of able and faithful Guides : But a *St. Paul* is at any Time, and in any Age of the Church, a great Loss : Nay, Men who are much inferior to *St. Paul*, but yet fitted with peculiar Abilities to serve the Church at some certain Seasons, and in some difficult Circumstances, are a very sensible Loss at such a Time, when their Service is most needful.

A Man of Counsel and Conduct, who is fit to sit at the Helm, and knows how to steer in a Storm, is a great Loss in Times of Difficulty and Trouble, when the Church is assaulted on all Hands, and it is hard to avoid one Mischief or Inconvenience without running into another.

A Man of Goodness and Temper, who knows how to govern his own Passions, and how to soften and manage the Passions of other Men, is a very sensible Loss, when the Passions of Men are broke loose, and disturb the Peace of the Church, and even threaten the Ruin of it.

A Man of Learning and sound Judgment, who can distinguish between Truth and Error, in all its most artificial and flattering Disguises,

guises, is a great Loss, when old Errors are revived, and new ones broached; when we must dispute over again the very Being of a God, the Truth of the Scriptures, and Articles of the Christian Faith.

A Man of great Diligence and Industry, Courage and Resolution, to defend the Truth, to oppose Heresies and Schisms, to preserve the Unity of the Church, and the Integrity of the Christian Faith, is a very great Loss, when the Church is encompassed and assaulted with busy and restless Enemies.

A Man of an exemplary Life, and untainted Virtue, who shines like a Light in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation who maintains the declining Honour and Reputation of Religion and true Virtue, is a mighty Loss in a profligate Age, when Men are grown such Strangers to the sincere Practice of Virtue and Religion, that they begin to think there is no such thing.

But I can go on no farther; the very mentioning of these things brings the fresh Idea of our deceased Brother to mind, and the afflicting Sense of that great Loss, which we suffer by his Death. It becomes us to reverence and adore the Wisdom of the divine Providence, even when we cannot understand the Reasons of it. We are certain God is never wanting in his Care of his Church; and yet had we been made Judges
of

of this Case, we should have thought it a very ill Time to have spared him.

He was abundantly furnished with all good Learning, both for Use and Ornament; he was an accomplished Scholar, and a well-studied Divine; he knew Books, and read them, and judged of them: He was a Scribe instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, who like a Householder could bring forth out of his Treasure, Things new and old, *Matth.* xiii. 52. He had carefully perused the ancient Philosophers, Orators, and Poets, to discover what Nature taught, which gave him a truer Knowledge and greater Value for the Excellency and Perfection of the Gospel-Revelation.

He had true and clear Notions of Religion, and he was Master of them; he knew why he believed any thing, and was neither prejudiced nor imposed on by popular Opinions; he was a hearty and zealous Assertor of the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Church of *England*; he saw nothing material, which could be changed for the better, which made him jealous of Innovations, as not knowing where they would end. He was a Friend to all sincere Christians, pitied their Mistakes, and bore with their Frowardness; but did not think that Christian Charity required him to sacrifice Truth, or good Order and Govern-

vernment, to the Pretences of Peace and Unity.

He was for several Years a very diligent and constant Preacher to a numerous Auditory, till his own Dioceſan, who knew his Worth, and the Weakneſs of his Conſtitution, and was deſirous to preſerve him for the Service of the Church, provided this Place where we now are, for his Eaſe, and Health, and Retirement; where he lived many Years a conſtant Preacher, though his Labours were then divided between his two Cures, which did not leſſen his Preaching, but made the Benefit of it the more diffuſive. For indeed he was an admirable Preacher, not for Noiſe and Lungs, but for well-digeſted uſeful pious Diſcourſes, delivered with all that becoming Gravity, Seriousneſs, and a commanding Elocution, as made them ſink deep into the Minds of his Hearers, and made them hear. This I ſpeak with Affurance and Confidence in this Place, which was ſo long bleſſed with his Labours: With what Fineneſs of Thought, Perſpicuity, and Eaſineſs of Expreſſion, inſtructing and entertaining Images of Things, he expounded the Doctrines, and inculcated the Laws of our Saviour! How plainly he taught, with what Vehemence and Paſſion he exhorted, with what tender Sharpneſs he reprov'd! Remember how he uſed both to pleaſe and inſtruct, to chide and ſhame
you

you, without making you angry; how he has warmed and chafed your Minds into the most pious and serious Resolutions, and sent you home from this Place wiser and better than you came; and if you grew cold, and suffered your good Resolutions to die again, consider, I beseech you, what Account you have to give.

As he grew in Years, it was necessary by Degrees to ease his Labours; he could not preach so often, but yet continued to preach. And yet had he not preached at all, or much less than he did, he had not ceased to be a very useful Pastor to the Church; for he was a Man of great Experience, and great Prudence and Foresight; fit for Government and Counsel; who knew Men and Things; was dexterous in his Applications, zealous without Passion or Peevishness, steady and resolved without violent Oppositions, and needless Provocations; who served the Church and the Truth with little Noise, and without making many Enemies: And I am sure at such a time as this, there is more need of such Men, and a much greater Scarcity of them, than of good Preachers.

But he was not only a good Preacher and a prudent Guide, but a very good Man: He preached continually by his Life and Example: His Conversation was innocent, entertaining, and useful; he was a true sincere Friend, very courteous, affable, civil to all Men,

Men, but never pretended Friendship where he had none: He was ready to do all good Offices, was liberal, generous, and charitable; a Man of a true public Spirit, who scorned to serve himself to the Injury of others; who hated little Arts and Tricks, mean and servile Compliances: He was an open and generous Enemy, if we may ever call him an Enemy, who never wished, never intended any Hurt to any Man; but my Meaning is, that when any Dispute and Quarrel happened, as such things will sometimes happen, he was open and undisguised; any Man might know what he disliked, and had no Reason to fear any thing worse from him, than what he would tell them. In a Word, he was a very good Christian, and that made him good in all Relations, and that crowned all his other Labours; he took care, as St. Paul did, *lest while he preached to others, he himself should become a cast-away*. And now he is gone to rest, and we must all shortly follow him; God grant that we may also run our Race, and finish our Course, that when we depart this Life we may rest in him, as our Hope is this our Brother doth; and may receive that Crown of Righteousness, which God the righteous Judge, will at that Day bestow on all his faithful Servants, and on all those who love his Appearing.



S E R M O N VIII.

Preached at the *Temple-Church*,
December 30, 1694. upon the
 sad Occasion of the Death of our
 gracious Queen. And published
 at the earnest Request of several
 Masters of the Bench of both So-
 cieties.

P S A L M xxxix. 9.

*I was dumb, and opened not my mouth,
 because thou didst it.*



HIS may be thought a very im-
 proper Text for the Feast of our
 Saviour's Birth, when our Mouths
 ought to be filled with the Praises
 of God, and sing with the whole
 Choir of Angels, *Glory be to God in the highest,
 on earth peace, good-will towards men.* This in-
 deed is that Peace, which the World cannot
 give, and which the World cannot take away;
 whatever the external Appearances of Provi-
 dence

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dence are, here we find a safe Retreat, and a never-failing Spring of Joy : For he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ? Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ?—Nay, in all these we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 32, 35, 37, &c. While our Minds are warmed with such Thoughts as these, we shall be able to bear up under the greatest Trials, if not with Cheerfulness, yet at least with Patience and a quiet Submission to the Will of God. And if ever there were Occasion for such comfortable and supporting Thoughts, the divine Providence has made it too necessary at this Time, to bear the Loss of an incomparable Lady, our most gracious Queen ; whose Death all good Subjects must lament, and I pray God forgive those that do not. Such severe Providences as these, will teach the greatest and most unbroken Minds, *to serve the Lord with fear, and to rejoice with trembling.* But how severe soever Providence is in some particular Instances, the Sense of the divine

divine Goodness in the Redemption of Mankind by the Incarnation and Death of his own Son, should teach us to be *dumb*, and *not open our mouths*, because it is his doing.

In speaking to which Words, I shall,

- I. Inquire, What may be called the Doings of the Lord?
- II. What it is to be dumb, and not to open our Mouths?
- III. The Force of this Argument, to oblige us to a quiet and patient Submission under the greatest Sufferings, that it is God's doing.

I. What may be called the *Doings of the Lord*? This may be thought a very needless Question; for are there any Events, Good or Evil, which are not God's Doing? If we believe a particular Providence, we must answer, No; and yet some things are more peculiarly God's Doings, than others are, with respect to this present Argument, as God's doing it, is a Reason for a quiet and patient Submission to the divine Will.

In many Cases Men bring Ruin and Misery upon themselves by their own Sin and Folly, and then they may thank themselves for it; but have no Reason to complain of Providence; and when they cannot charge Providence with their Misfortunes, Patience itself

is not properly a Submission to God ; because their Sufferings are no more God's Will, than their Sin and Folly is.

If Men destroy their Estates by Profuseness and Prodigalty, and their Bodies by Intemperance and Lust ; if ill-contracted Friendships, indiscreet Bargains, or an ungovernable Tongue, perplex their Affairs, and prove very troublesome or dangerous, all this is owing, not merely to Providence, but to themselves ; and they must be contented to reap the Fruit of their own Doings, and to implore the divine Goodness and Providence to deliver them from the evil Consequences of their own Sin and Folly.

Whatever Evils we suffer, which are not the natural or moral Effects of our own Sin or Folly, they are properly God's Doings, as inflicted by God, either for the Punishment of our Sins, or for the Trial and Exercise of our Virtues, or to serve the wise Ends of his Providence in the World.

Those Evils which we do not immediately bring upon ourselves, God inflicts on us, either by the Ministry of wicked and injurious Men, or by the Disorders of natural Causes, or by some seeming casual and fortuitous Events ; for the Actions of Men, the Powers of Nature, and what we call Chance and Fortune, are all in the Hands of God, and therefore are more or less his Doings.

But

But if we may say, that some things are more peculiarly the Care of Providence than others, Life and Death are certainly so ; no Man can be born or die, without the particular Order and Appointment of God : Our Saviour tells us, *not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father* ; much less Men ; and assures his Disciples, that *all the hairs of their head are numbered* ; and their Lives are more sacred than their Hairs. Some Men are of Opinion, that God has absolutely decreed the certain Term and Period of every Man's Life : But I know no Foundation for this, neither in Scripture nor Reason ; nor does any Man believe it, but those who subject all Mankind, and all the Things of this World, to irreverfible Neceffity and Fate, which is the Strength of the atheiftic Hypothefis ; though incautiously espoufed by some Men, who are fo far from being Atheifts, that I hope they are very good Christians. And therefore, I fuppofe, thefe Christian Fatalifts, if I may fo call them, mean no more than what we all own, that no Sparrow, much lefs a Man, falls to the Ground without our Father ; that God not only foreknows the Period of every Man's Life, and by what means he fhall die, but with infinite Wifdom and Juftice, orders and appoints it ; not by an abfolute and unconditional Decree, but as the wife Determination of a free and juft Providence.

And if God have any more Concernment for Nations and Commonwealths, than he has for particular Men (as we, who can attend but a few things at once, and therefore make the Matters of greatest Importance our more particular Care, are apt to conceive) then the Lives and Deaths of Princes must be more particularly ordered and determined by God; because Nations, it may be many Nations and Countries, more than their own, are concerned in the Consequence of it; and of the more universal Concernment any thing is, the more we are apt to think it belongs to the Care of God.

For this Reason some Philosophers have confined the Providence of God to the Heavens, and heavenly Bodies, which have such a universal Influence on Things below; or to Nations and public Societies, and to the several Kinds and Species of Beings, not to particular Men or Creatures.

And so far they were in the right, that if the divine Providence could not equally take care of the whole World, and of every particular Creature in it; it would certainly in the first place take care of the great Springs of Motion. But though this be no Reason for God's peculiar Care of one thing more than another, because his all-seeing Eye, and almighty Arm, can equally take care of all; yet our Saviour has taught us from the Worth and Value of Things, that God will certainly
take

of the Queen's Death. 181

take the more Care of them, and in case of any Competition, give the Preference to Things of the greatest Moment. *Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them; are ye not much better than they? And if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* Matt. vi. 26, 30. Where from God's Care of mean inferior Creatures, the Fowls of the Air, and the Grass of the Field, he more strongly concludes his Care of Men; and by the same Reason from his Care of particular Men, we may more strongly conclude his Care of Kingdoms and Nations, and therefore of the Lives of Princes, who are the great Ministers of his Government and Providence, and whose Lives or Deaths make such a mighty Change in the Affairs of the World. So that when, or by what means soever Princes die, this is God's doing; and how severe soever we may feel it, *we must be dumb, and not open our mouths, because he has done it*; which is the

IId. Thing to be explained, What is meant by being *dumb, and not opening our mouths*. For this seems a very hard Saying, in the strict literal Sense, that we must not complain of our Sufferings, when we feel them smart: Human Nature cannot bear this: We must feel

our Sufferings, and when we feel them, we must complain : To have no Sense of what we suffer, is Stupidity, not Submission ; it is Irreverence for the Judgments of God, and in some Cases the most unpardonable Baseness and Ingratitude to Men. To be unconcerned for the Death of our dearest Friends, or greatest Patrons and Benefactors, not to pay Nature's Tribute to their Memories in a Sigh and a Tear ; not to long after them, and send some vain Wishes to call them back ; not to preserve their Idea fresh in our Minds, and to think, with some Uneasiness, of those happy Hours which their Conversation sweetened ; to part with our Friends as if we suffered nothing by their Loss, and were as well without them ; is so far from being a Virtue, that such a Man is incapable of ever being a Friend, and never deserves to have any ; much more then, when we lose a public Friend and Benefactor, the greatest of Friends and Benefactors, which is a good Prince.

Let us briefly consider, what we have lost in the Loss of our gracious Queen, and try if we can bear the Thoughts of it without complaining. She was the Glory of her Sex, and an Ornament to the Crown she wore ; made truly Great by Nature, Birth, and Education.

She

She had a large and capacious Mind, a quick and lively Apprehension, and a piercing and solid Judgment: She had a Strength and Firmness of Mind beyond her Sex, and such a Dexterity in managing the greatest Affairs, as would have become the greatest and most experienced Ministers. Never was there greater Skill in Government, with less Fondness for it, which she could take up and lay down, with the same Equality and Indifference of Mind; though, I doubt, I must unsay that; for she was always grieved at the Occasion of taking the Government, and as glad to resign it.

Never was Majesty better tempered with Easiness and Sweetness: She knew how to be familiar, without making herself cheap, and to condescend without Meanness: She had all the Greatness of Majesty, with all the Virtues of Conversation; and knew very well, what became her Table, and what became the Council-board.

She understood her Religion, and loved it, and practised it; and was the greatest Example of the Age, of a constant, regular, unaffected Devotion, and of all the eminent Virtues of a *Christian Life*. In the midst of all the great *Affairs of State*, she would rather spare Time from her Sleep, than from her Prayers, where she always appeared with that great Composure and Seriousness of Mind, as if her Court had been a Nunnery,

and she had had nothing else to do in the World.

In all the Ease and Prosperity of Fortune, she had that Tenderness and Compassion for those who suffered, which Sufferings themselves cannot teach meaner Persons. She was Charitable to the utmost of her Power, amidst all the Expences of War and Government; and when a proper Object was presented to her, was always pleased when she could grant their Requests, and very uneasy to deny.

In short, her greatest and most implacable Enemies, (for Virtue itself will meet with Enemies in this World) had no other Fault to charge her with, but her Throne; which is the only thing for which most other Princes are valuable. She ascended the Throne, indeed, before she desired it; but was thrust into it, not by an hasty Ambition, but to save a sinking Church and Kingdom; and I hope *England* will always have Reason to say, That an empty Throne could never have been filled with a nobler Pair.

But though the necessary Absence of the King, to give a Check to the Progress of a powerful and insulting Monarch, engaged her more than she desired in *State Affairs*; yet the promoting of true Religion, and the Service of the Church of *England*, [the greatest and best Nursery of it, since the Apostolic Age] was her constant and natural
 2 Care,

Care. This her Thoughts were full of, and she had formed great and noble Designs, had she outlived the Difficulties and Expences of War; and been at leisure to attend the peaceful Arts of Government.

I have Reason to say this, from those frequent Intimations I have had from our late admirable Primate, who had great Designs himself to serve the *Christian Religion*, and the *Church of England*, in its truest Interests; and had inspired their Majesties, and particularly the Queen, who had more Leisure for such Thoughts, with the same great and pious Designs: It may be no Churchman ever had, I am sure not more deservedly, a greater Interest in his Prince's Favour; and the great Use he made of it, was to do public Service to Religion; and, whatever some Men might suspect, to the *Church of England*, though it may be not perfectly in their Way: And the greatest Fault I know he had, was, that some envious and ambitious Men could not bear his Greatness, which he himself never courted, nay, which he industriously avoided.

Before this, all *England* knew and owned his Worth; and had it been put to the Poll, there had been vast Odds on his Side, that he would have been voted into the See of *Canterbury*; for no Man had ever a clearer and brighter Reason, a truer Judgment, a more easy and happy Expression, nor a more inflexible,

inflexible, fearless Honesty : He was a true and hearty Friend, and was a true Friend where-ever he professed to be so : Though he had many Enemies at last, he took care to make none. He was obliging to all Men; and though he could not easily part with a Friend, he could easily forgive an Enemy, as that Bundle of Libels witnesses, which was found among his other Papers, with this Inscription : *These are Libels ; I pray God forgive them ; I do.*

But I cannot give you the just Character of this great Man now ; what I have already said, I confess, is an Excursion, which I hope you will pardon to the Passion of an old Friend ; and learn from two great Examples, that neither the greatest Innocence, Virtue, or Merit, can defend, either crowned or mitred Heads, from the Lash of spiteful and envenomed Tongues. But what a Loss has *Religion* and the *Church of England*, in such a critical Time, in the Death of such a *Queen*, and such a *Prelate* ! I pray God make up this Loss.

In a Word, That great Passion which afflicts and oppresses our good King, gives an unexceptionable Testimony to the incomparable Worth of our deceased *Queen* ; the too severe and visible Effects of it shew, that it is not an ordinary, nor a dissembled Passion ; nor is it an ordinary thing, for a Prince of so great a Mind, who can look the most formidable

midable Dangers, and Death itself, in the Face, without Fear; whom all the Powers of *France* cannot make look pale or tremble, to sink, and faint, and to feel all the Agonies of Death in the dying Looks of a beloved Consort. All Story cannot furnish us with many Examples of such soft and tender Passions, in such a warlike and fearless Mind; and what but a mighty Virtue could so charm a Prince, as to forget his natural Constancy and Resolution? I am sure, though we pay very dear for the Experiment in the Loss of an excellent *Queen*, we have so much the more Reason to think ourselves happy in a *King*; for a due Mixture and Temperament of such fearless Courage and Bravery, and such tender Passions, is the most perfect Composition of an excellent Prince.

And now it may be, you will tell me, that I have taken great Pains to confute my Text, and that I have done it effectually; for we ought not to be dumb, but may very justly complain of such a Loss as this.

This I readily grant, That we may complain of such a Loss; but this is no Confutation of my Text. We may complain, and give Ease and Vent to our Sorrows by such Complaints, while we do not complain against God, and accuse him foolishly. To submit to the Will of God, which is here expressed by being *dumb*, and *not opening our mouths*, does not signify, not to feel our Losses and Sufferings,

Sufferings, or not to complain of them; but not to reproach the divine Providence, nor to cast off our Hope and Trust in God. *Job* felt his Sufferings, and complained of them in as moving and tragical Expressions, as any other Man could, and yet is proposed to us, as an Example of admirable Patience, because he did not *charge God foolishly*, nor cast off his Hope in him.

This we never can have any Reason for; for whatever we suffer, it is a wise and merciful Providence which inflicts it: But yet Mankind are very apt, when they suffer hard Things, either to deny a Providence, or which is more absurd and unreasonable, to reproach it; for if there be a God, he is wise, and good, and merciful, and just, which is the Notion all Mankind have of God; and if this God governs the World, all Events are ordered with Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness; and all thinking Men, in cool and sober Thoughts, will be ashamed to quarrel with such a Providence.

But yet we are very apt to ask Questions, which we cannot easily answer, and then to make our own Ignorance an Objection against the divine Providence.

As in the Case before us, the sudden and untimely Death of an excellent Princess, who had Strength and Vigour of Age, which promised a much longer Life, and who would certainly have done great Good to the World,

as long as she had lived ; but is cut off in the Vigour and Strength of Age, and all her Thoughts, even all her great and excellent Designs of doing good to the World, perish with her ; while Tyrants and Oppressors live to be the Plagues and Scourges of Mankind.

Now though we do not know the particular Reasons of such Providences, yet it is easy to frame some general Answers, which may satisfy all the Friends of Providence.

If the Objection relates to ourselves, who suffer by this Loss, there is a very plain Answer to it, but a very terrible one ; that God is angry with us, and by the untimely Death of an excellent Princess, who made it her whole Study and Design to do us Good, threatens his Judgments against us, if we do not take care to prevent them by a timely Repentance.

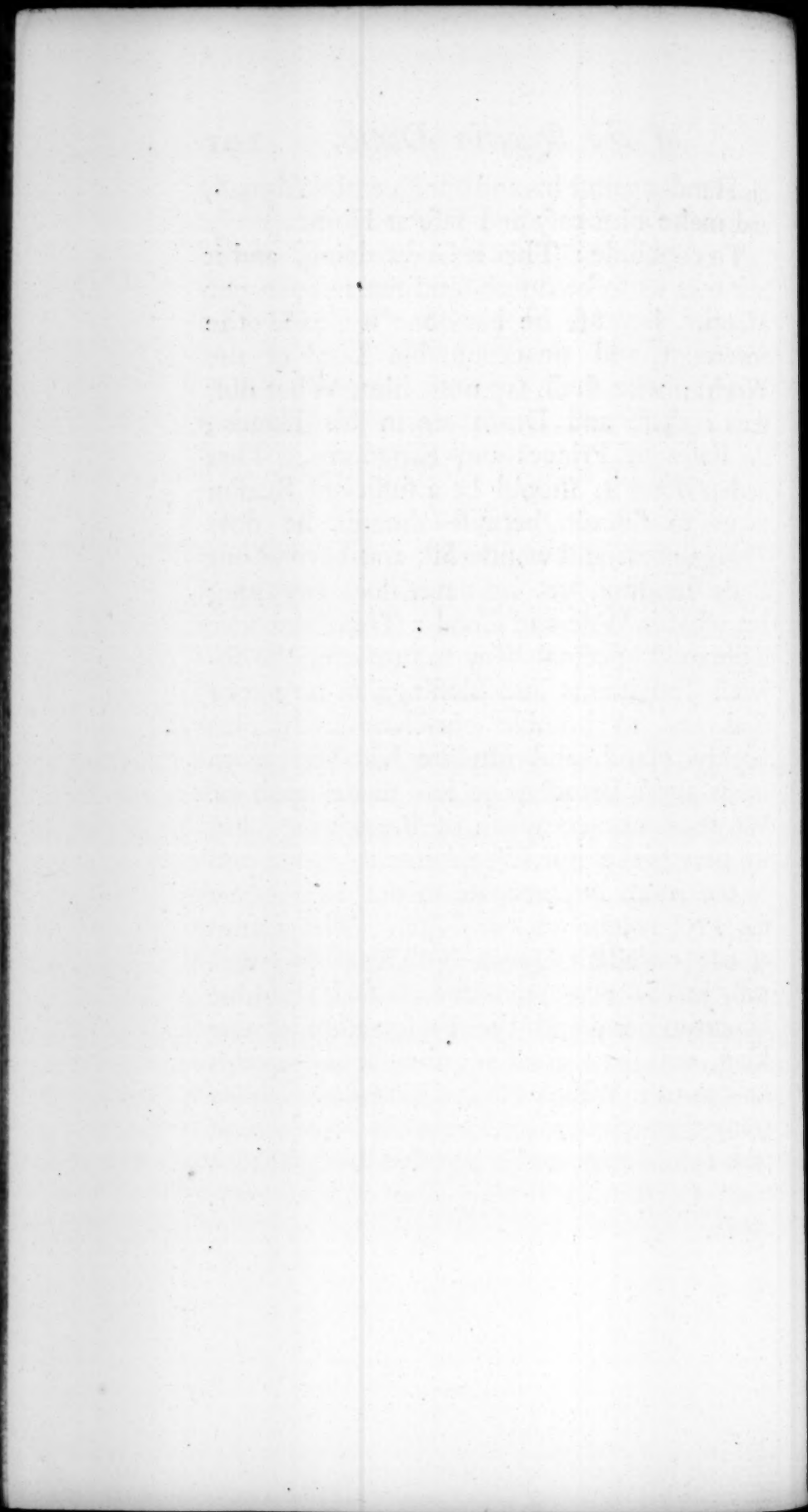
If the Objection relates only to the untimely Death of an excellent Princess, that she should so suddenly be snatched away from the Joys and Pleasures of a Throne ; this is no Objection at all ; at least not an Objection fit for Christians to make : For can we think, that the greatest and most happy Monarch, loses any thing by the Exchange, if he be translated from Earth to Heaven ? That the Joys of Paradise are not greater than a Crown ? Our good *Queen* did not think so, who knew what an earthly Crown meant, but was willing
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to part with it for Heaven ; who saw Death approaching without Fear, and prepared to receive its Stroke with that Calmness and Sedateness of Mind, as nothing could give but an innocent Conscience, and much greater Hopes.

But as for ourselves, though we must acknowledge that we have received a very great Loss, in the Death of an excellent *Queen*, yet we have no Reason to quarrel at Providence, while God preserves our King to go in and out before us. We had indeed perpetual Day ; and no sooner was one Sun withdrawn, but another ascended our Horizon, with equal Lustre and Brightness : This was a peculiar Happiness which we never had before, and which the Necessities of our Affairs required now ; but though God has cut us short in this, we have a King still, the Terror of *France*, and the Protector of *Europe* ; a King, whom Affection as well as Blood has naturalized to us ; who loves our Nation and our Church, which he has once delivered, and God grant he may live long to settle and protect both. We have no Reason to fear our Enemies, either at home or abroad, while a Prince is at the Helm, who wants neither Counsel nor Courage ; especially if we follow that noble Example, which the two Houses of Parliament have set us, to give him such fresh Assurances of our Fidelity, as may strengthen his

his Hands against his and our Enemies Abroad, and make him easy and safe at Home.

To conclude : This is God's doing, and it becomes us to be dumb, and not to open our Mouths, because he has done it : He is the Sovereign and unaccountable Lord of the World ; who shall say unto him, What dost thou ? Life and Death are in his Hands ; the Fates of Princes and Kingdoms. That he has done it, should be a sufficient Reason to us to submit, because though he does Things great and wonderful, and beyond our Understanding, yet he never does any thing but what is Wise and Good : This I am sure is the most effectual Way to turn even the severest Judgments into Blessings, to reverence God, and to humble ourselves under his mighty Hand, and implore his Mercy, to repair those Breaches he has made upon us. We must not complain of Providence ; but we may make our Complaints to God, and be the more importunate in our Prayers for the Preservation of our King. The Death of our excellent Queen both calls for, and will justify and recommend such humble Importunities ; and the Preservation of our King, will, in a great measure, make up this Loss to us : Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ ; to whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever. *Amen.*





SERMON IX.

Preached before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, and the Court of Aldermen, at the Parish-Church of *St. Bridget*, on *Tuesday* in *Easter Week*, *April 6, 1697.*

2 COR. viii. 12.

For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

THE Occasion of these Words was this. The Christians of *Judea* were at this time in great Want; by reason of a general Dearth, which was foretold by *Agabus* at *Antioch*, Acts XI. 28. *And there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit, that there should be great dearth throughout all the world;*

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which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar. Upon this Notice, the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa.

This is that Contribution for the Saints which St. Paul directs them about, at the Conclusion of his first Epistle to them, chap. xvi. and this is what he inculcates on them in this and the following Chapter; but with so much Art and Insinuation, that though he uses the most powerful Arguments, yet he would not seem to persuade, nor to think that they needed any Persuasion; for it is not honourable for Christians, whose Religion is Charity, to need such Persuasions and Importunities. They may be directed in their Charity, and put in mind of such particular Charities as are of the greatest Necessity, or the most present Use, or have the most general Influence, or do the greatest Reputation and Service to Religion; or their Charity may be heightened, inflamed, and enlarged, by the proper Arguments and Motives of Liberality; but their Religion teaches them to be charitable, and the Name and Profession of a Christian is a Reproach to them without it: And this is all the Apostle aims at even in his soft and tender way of Persuasion; not merely to persuade them to contribute to the Necessities of the Saints, which he knew they were willing to do; but that they should contribute liberally, with a free and chearful Heart, and open

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open Hand; which is the Sum of all his Arguments, as I shall shew you in the Conclusion, if Time permit.

But the great Difficulty concerns the proper Measures of a liberal and overflowing Charity. Our Saviour has prescribed no set Bounds and Proportions to our Charity; and it is thought as possible to be imprudent and excessive, as too frugal and sparing: We have many other Obligations upon us besides Charity; to provide for our own comfortable Subsistence, to take care of our Wives and Children, and to discharge all other Duties and Offices according to our Station and Character in the World: All which ought to set Bounds to our Charity. But what these Bounds are, is thought the great Question, which is not easily answered: This is true; nor can any certain Measures be prescribed; nor does the Apostle pretend to it: But though there is a great Latitude in true Christian Charity, which does not consist in a Point, but admits of different Degrees and Proportions; yet the Apostle, in my Text, directs us to such a Principle, as is much better and safer than any stated Rules, because it will be sure never to sink below the just Proportions of Charity, and will render all we do, be it more or less, very acceptable to God. *For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

In which Words, I shall observe Three Things, which are exprest or necessarily implied in them.

- I. That a great Readiness and Forwardness of Mind to do good, is the true Spirit of Charity, which gives Value and Acceptation to all we do.
- II. That this Readiness of Mind to do good, to relieve the Necessities of those who want, will observe the just Proportions of Giving, will give *according to what a man hath*, as is necessarily implied in the Words; for if a willing Mind be accepted, according to what a Man hath, it is because it gives according to what a Man hath.
- III. That where there is this willing Mind, with a fitting Proportion according to our Abilities, whether it be more or less, which we give, it is equally acceptable to God. Such a Man *is accepted according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not*. I shall speak as briefly as I can to each of these, that I may not be prevented in such an Application as is proper to this Solemnity.

I. That a great Readiness and Forwardness of Mind (*προθυμία* signifies) to do good, to relieve the Necessities of those in want, is the true Spirit of Charity, and gives Value and Acceptation to all we do. Such a Willingness
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of Mind, when *προκειται*, it is the Principle and first Mover in all our charitable Actions, is *ευπροσδεξις*, very acceptable to God.

This, I think, I may take for granted; for what is the Grace and Virtue of Charity, but a charitable Inclination, Disposition, Temper, Habit of Mind? And what is this but a Readiness and Forwardness to do good: Our Inclinations and Passions are the Principles of Action, and therefore have a natural Tendency toward their proper Acts and Objects, and will act when they have the Power and Opportunity of Action: Charity is Love, the Love of Pity and Compassion to the Miseries and Sufferings and Wants of our Brethren; and Love in all other Instances is a very restless active Principle; and so will our Love to the Poor and Miserable be, if it be Inclination and Habit.

There is no Man but will pretend to be very ready and willing to do good, though he never does any; for to have no Inclination to do good is so infamous, that those who do no good, are ashamed to own it; but to do no good, is a plain Evidence against them, when nothing can hinder them from doing good, but the want of Will and Inclination to do it, when God has furnished them with the Means of doing good; and there are Thousands of Objects to exercise their Charity, and to move their Pity, if they had any. The Will is accepted for the Deed,

both by God and Men, when it is not in our Power to do that good which we sincerely desire to do, and which we would certainly do, were it in our Power ; but it is to mock both God and Men, to pretend a Willingness, when it is visible to all the World, that a Will to do good is the only thing we want. But such a Readiness and Willingness of Mind as is active and vigorous, as contrives and lays Designs of Charity, or embraces such as are offered, and takes all wise Opportunities of doing good, this is very acceptable to God, as being the most divine and godlike Temper, the Image of his own Goodness, and the noblest Exercise of our Love to Men, inspired with the Love of God. Now in moral Actions, it is the Principle that gives the Value; not so much the Gift, as the Mind of the Giver ; and therefore St. Paul tells us, that though *we give all our goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, we are nothing*, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. God can feed the Poor without us, if he so pleases ; but as for several other wise Ends of Providence, so he has ordered, that *the poor shall be always with us*, for the Trial and Exercise of our Virtue ; but the Virtue is not the Gift, but the Charity. And could we perform all the Acts of Charity without a charitable Mind, the World might be better for it, but not we ourselves.

Secondly,

Secondly. This Readiness and Forwardness of Mind to do good, will observe the just Proportions of Charity, will give *according to what a man hath*. I observed before, that our Saviour in his Gospel hath prescribed no fixt Measures nor Proportions of Charity: Nor could he reasonably do this, considering the Nature of Charity; which though it be not so absolutely free, that we may choose whether we will be charitable or no (for charitable we must be at the peril of our Souls;) yet the Proportions must be free, or it is not Charity, but a Poor's Rate, as all the positive Laws which God gave the *Jews* for the Relief of the Poor, were no better; and therefore, by the wiser *Jews*, were never placed to the Account of Charity, but of Justice, and a legal Righteousness; which is the very Distinction St. Paul makes between a *righteous* and a *good man*, Rom. v. 7. *But scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man one would even dare to die.* A righteous Man is one who is legally righteous, and observes what the Law requires; but a good Man is one who is acted by a free, unconfined and generous goodness.

Now upon this Pretence, that there is no Proportion assigned to Charity, there are too many, who content themselves with very little, indeed with nothing which can properly be called Charity. But I wonder in the

mean time what these Men make of all those Commands and Exhortations which we find in the Gospel to Charity, which are so many, so pressing and importunate, and bound on us by so many Promises of present and future Rewards, and with so many terrible Threatnings denounced against the Uncharitable, that surely they must mean something; and as willing as Men are in these Cases to pretend Ignorance, I believe there are few Men living, but know in some measure what Charity means: And though they may dispute, how much they ought to give; yet certainly know, that they ought to give; and that to give nothing, or what is next to nothing, all Circumstances considered, is not Charity.

A charitable Temper and Disposition of Mind is an indispensable Duty, and the most essential Part of the Christian Religion. This our Saviour commands, and he need command no more; for Charity is and will be a Rule and a Measure to itself. Where this divine Principle is, it will teach us when, and how, and in what Proportion to give: The Sun needs no Rules and Directions how to communicate its Light and Heat. Nature is the surest and most infallible Rule, and Law to itself; and thus it is proportionably in moral as well as in natural Agents. For what is the immediate Effect of Nature and Life, can never be taught without its Principle; cannot exceed its Principle, and cannot

cannot fall below it. All the Rules in the World can never teach that Man Charity, who wants the Principle; a charitable Mind needs no Rules, but turns naturally on its own Bias; which will direct its Motions right.

There is a great Difference indeed between natural and moral Agents. Natural Agents are necessarily determined to some one End, and therefore have but one Principle which uniformly and steadily pursues the Ends of Nature; but moral Agents, as they act freely, so they have many different Principles, Inclinations, and Passions, which stint and limit each other; that none of them can act to their utmost Vigour, but as they are naturally poized and balanced: And this is the Work of Reason and Religion, to put them into their natural Order, and to set just Bounds to them; and that proportions the Degrees of their Activity and Strength; but yet every Principle, unless violently oppressed, will act according to its Nature, as it more or less prevails: And this gives Measures and Proportions to all our Actions; as to shew you this in our present Case.

Charity is that Love to Mankind which makes us pity all their Wants and Sufferings, and inspires us with a great Zeal and Concernment to help and relieve them. If you inquire, what the natural Measure of this Charity is? I know no other natural Measure, but
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its natural End, that is, to relieve all that suffer and are in want; for that is what Charity would do, and what all charitable Men heartily wish that they could do. Well! but this is impossible, for there are too many miserable People for any Man to relieve them all. This is true, and want of Power must of necessity set Bounds to our Charity; but since we cannot relieve all, we must relieve such as we can; and wisely consider where the greatest Necessities and greatest Obligations are: Which will give the Preference to Christians before Infidels; to good Men before the Wicked; to God's Poor, whom the divine Providence has made poor; to the Poor of their own making, whom Idleness, Luxury, and Vice have made poor and miserable. Well! But how far must we relieve these Poor? Must we give as long as we have any thing to give, and make ourselves the Objects of Charity? By no means! There are other as natural Principles as Charity, which must set Bounds to it. Self-love is a natural and necessary Principle; no Man is bound to love any Man better than himself: To love our Neighbour as ourselves, is all that the Gospel itself makes our necessary Duty; though some great and generous Friendships, and divine Charities, may go further, as far as concerns this Life. Next to Self-love, our natural Affection for our Wives and Children must take place, as ingrafted in it, and thought
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the best and the dearest Part of it, as being nearest to ourselves, and what the best Men are the most tenderly concerned for. And this is the chief thing, which among Men of any Principles, disputes the Bounds of Charity: For as for those stupid Brutes, who love Money only to look on, or to count their Bags and Securities, without suffering themselves, or any body else, to use it, they are not fit to be named; for I can hardly reckon them among reasonable Creatures. But Mens Care of themselves, and of their Wives and Children (not to descend at present to other Relations, which may come within the Compass of Charity, though of a nearer and more sacred Obligation) is thought a very prudent and reasonable Consideration in this Case, and indeed is so; for there is a great deal of Truth and Reason in that common Saying, rightly understood, *That Charity begins at Home.*

The great Controversy then is between our Love to ourselves, our Wives and Children, and Charity to the Poor. Now there is no Dispute but the first must have the Preference; but yet Charity to the Poor must have its Place also: And then the only Question is, In what Proportion this must be? And that is a very hard Question, if you put it in Arithmetic; for I can name no Proportion, nor has our Saviour thought fit to name any: But, as I observed to you before, true Charity will assign a just Proportion to itself: For a true charitable

ritable Mind will spare what it reasonably can, and never below the Proportion of Charity; and will spare more or less, according to the Degrees of its Charity. I must be forced to represent this in short to you, that I may not be tedious.

That Love we have for ourselves, and for our natural Dependents, will generally secure us against exceeding the Proportions of Charity, that there is seldom any Danger on that side. On the other hand, if we have a true charitable Mind, and a sincere Compassion for the Sufferings of others, we shall certainly do what we ourselves, considering our Circumstances, and what all charitable Men, who know our Circumstances, will call Charity. But then, the more intense and fervent our Charity is, this will still increase the Proportion, and sometimes to such Heights, as can hardly escape the Censure of Affectation and Folly; and were it not for the Interposition of the divine Providence, might sometimes prove very fatal to themselves and their Families. As to give you the Account of this in short: There are Two Things absolutely necessary to dispose Men to give liberally: A just Sense of the Miseries of others, and a true Judgment of our own Abilities.

As for the first:

A charitable Mind is very easy to receive the Impressions of Charity; and the more charitably it is disposed, still the more easy.

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Every pitiable Object moves and affects such Men, and they are no more able to resist the silent Oratory of meager Looks, naked Backs, and hungry Bellies (were they not sometimes hardened by Cheats and Vagabonds) than to deny themselves what is necessary to Life; much less can they deny any known and unquestioned Charity; for since charitable they are, and Acts of Charity they will do, they are very glad to know how to dispose of their Charity, to do that good which they intend by it. A soft and tender Mind, which feels the Sufferings of others, and suffers with them, is the true Temper and Spirit of Charity; and Nature prompts us to ease those Sufferings which we feel: This makes us so ready to supply our own Wants, because we have a quick and smart Sense of them; and the Christian's sympathy and Fellow-feeling of Charity, will proportionably incline us to relieve our suffering Brethren, when we feel in ourselves what it is they suffer. An inward Principle is more powerful than all external Arguments; and Sense and Feeling is this Principle; and Charity is this Sense.

Thus as for Proportions, a charitable Mind sets no other Bounds to its Charity, but only Ability; that the only Question is, whether we can spare any thing from ourselves and Families; and what we can spare? Now when Charity is the Judge of this, it is always a favourable Judge on the Side of the Poor
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and Miserable ; and always the more favourable Judge, the greater the Charity is : It will teach us to think, that we want less, and consequently can spare more, when we consider how much others want : At least it will teach us to abate of what we do not want ; of all idle and superfluous Expences ; of all needless Pomp and Ceremony, which is more than our Station and Character requires ; and it is incredible to think, what an inexhausted Fund this would be for Charity. Did we truly estimate our own Wants, rectify our Expences, and set just Bounds to our Desires, many of us would soon find that we have a great deal to spare ; and nothing will so effectually do this, as Charity ; and therefore Charity is the best Rule and Measure to itself. So that there is no great Occasion to dispute Proportions ; let us learn to be charitable, and Charity will teach us what to give. Every Man can tell when another is charitable ; and a charitable Man can tell when he himself is so ; and as our Charity increases, so we shall abound in the Fruits of Charity ; for the more we love, the more liberally we shall give.

This is not to leave what we will give to charitable Uses, to our own free Choice, as a Trial of our Ingenuity, as some represent it : For had this been the Case, there should have been some Proportion fixed, less than which we should not give, though we might give as much more as we pleased ; for other-
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wife nothing is matter of strict Duty, but all is left to Ingenuity; which is so far from being true, that there is not a more necessary Duty in all Religion than Charity; and even the greatest Degrees and Heights of Charity are all Duty: For we are commanded to be charitable, and to aim at the highest Degrees of Charity; and the Proportion of Giving is referred to the Principle; and included in the Degrees of Charity; such a Proportion as such a Degree of Charity will give, is as much a strict Duty as such a Degree of Charity is.

The very Nature of Charity proves that thus it is, and that it cannot be otherwise. For merely to give or not to give; to give more or less, is no certain Proof of a charitable or uncharitable Man; how liberally soever we give, we are not charitable unless we give from a Principle of Charity, and our Charity be as great as our Gift. So that had God prescribed how much every Man must give to the Poor, they might have observed this Proportion of Giving without any Charity, and then such Gifts as these had been no Acts of Charity, when the Gift and the Charity was parted: But a charitable Man will give, and will give in proportion to the Degrees of his Charity; and therefore Charity, and the Increase of Charity, is the only proper Object of Command; for he will give liberally who gives much, and the Proportion of Giving his commanded in the Degrees of Charity; which

which alone can prescribe, and will observe a just Proportion.

Let no Man then inquire, how much he must give? The proper Inquiry is, how much he must love? Let no Man satisfy himself with some small trifling Presents, which bear no Proportion to what he has, upon pretence that God has prescribed no Proportion of Giving; but let him ask himself, whether, in his own Conscience, what he gives, bears any Proportion to that Love and Charity to the Poor and Miserable, which God requires? And let him remember, that though God has not fixed the Proportions of Giving, he requires great Degrees of Charity; and though Men may give liberally without Charity, yet not to give in some due Proportion, is a certain Sign of want of Charity, when there wants no Ability to give.

Give me leave to observe by the way, that what I have now said of Charity, is true of all other Christian Graces and Virtues: That it is the Principle, which both must and will give Laws and Measures to the external Acts of such Graces and Virtues: As to instance at present only in the Acts of religious Worship, the Measures and Proportions of which are as much disputed, and no more determined and limited by the Laws of our Saviour, than those of Charity: We are commanded to fast and pray, and to communicate at the Lord's Table, and to read and meditate on the holy
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Scriptures, and such other Acts of Religion; but we are not told, how often we must fast and pray, and receive the Lord's Supper, nor how much Time we must spend in our public or private Devotions; for though all the public Exercises of Religion must be regulated by the public Authority of the Church, which as to Time and Place, and other external Circumstances, is the safest Rule; yet our private Devotions are free, and both public and private Devotions have a great Latitude: And thus as it is in the Case of Charity, some Men think, they can never spend Time enough in the public and private Exercises of Religion; and others think a very little will serve the Turn, and any trifling Pretence is sufficient to excuse them from their Closets, or the Church, and especially from the Lord's Table.

And the Resolution of this is the same, as in the Case of Charity: We are commanded to be devout Worshipers of God, and the true Spirit of Devotion naturally prescribes the external Measures and Proportions. Devout Minds, who have a true Sense of God, and of their constant Dependence on him, that they owe all temporal and spiritual Blessings to him, and daily need the Pardon of their Sins, the Protection of his Providence, and the Supplies of his Grace, will never fail to worship God, whom they inwardly reverence and adore; and as our devout Sense of God increases in Strength and Vigour, the

external Expressions of Devotion will be more frequent, more lively and affecting ; for Nature will exert itself, and will exert itself in proportion to its Strength and Vigour. But to return.

III. The Third Thing I proposed, I must at present wave ; that where there is a willing Mind, with a fit Proportion, according to our Abilities, (which, as you have heard, there will be, where there is a truly willing and charitable Mind) whether it be more or less that we give, it is equally acceptable to God. Such a Man is accepted according to what he hath, not according to what he hath not ; and indeed there is no great Occasion to insist on it ; for it is self-evident, that God will not exact that from us, which we have not.

Only we must observe, that this does not excuse any Man from Charity, though he have nothing to give ; he must have a willing charitable Mind to make him accepted ; nor does it excuse those from Charity, who have but little to give, for they must give according to what they have ; nor does it excuse those who have nothing to give, from other Acts of Charity, which require the giving nothing, and a great many such Acts of real Charity there are, which poor People may do for each other, though they have not a Penny in their Purse.

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But it is time now to turn my Discourse to the proper Business of this great Solemnity. Public Charities are always reckoned amongst the greatest Ornaments of any Country, and make up the most lovely and charming Part of their Characters : Stately and magnificent Buildings shew great Art, and great Riches, and a gallant and noble Genius, but great Charities have something divine, and strike the Mind with a religious Veneration. There may be much more magnificent Shows than this Day's Procession, but none which affect wise and good Men with a sincerer Pleasure : To follow a great Number of Orphans in the mean but decent Dress of Charity, singing the Praises of God, and praying for their Benefactors, is beyond all the *Roman* Triumphs, however adorned with a pompous Equipage, and great Numbers of royal Slaves.

These present us with nothing but the miserable Spectacles of Spoil and Rapine, the uncertain Changes and Vicissitudes of Fortune, the lamentable Fate of conquered Princes and People, and the Pride and Insolence of Conquerors ; but here are the Triumphs of a generous Goodness and divine Charity, Triumphs without Blood and Spoil, without Slaves and Captives, unless redeemed Slaves, rescued from the Jaws of Poverty, and all the Injuries and Miseries of a ruined Fortune : That to me this great City, and this honourable Train, never looks greater

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than in this humble Pomp. A Pomp not for Vanity and Ostentation, but to endear and recommend Charity, by shewing the visible and blessed Fruits of it ; and to the same End, I must give you an Account of the present State of these public Charities.

The Report was here read.

That these are all great Charities I need not tell you ; indeed all so great, that it is hard to know, to which to give the Preference, and what Occasion all these Charities have of fresh, liberal, and constant Supplies, *the Report* acquaints you.

But I cannot pass over one thing I observe in *this Report*, and which, I fear many necessitous People feel, that there have been no *Orphans* taken into *Christ's Hospital* this Year, nor, as I remember, for two Years last past. I do not mention this by way of Reflection, as any Fault in the Administration and Government, but to put you in mind how much that excellent Foundation needs your Supply ; and though I do not love to compare Charities, they being all of great Use and Necessity in their Kind, yet I think this Foundation has something to plead for itself beyond any other.

A helpless Age, destitute of Friends, and all Means of Support, will plead for itself, without saying any thing : It is a pitiable Sight,

Sight, to see poor innocent Children turned helpless into the wide World to starve, or beg, or steal, or to suffer all imaginable Difficulties and Necessities at home ; without Education, without Government or Discipline, without being used to Labour, or taught any honest Way of Living ; which, as they grow up, improves into a Habit of Idleness, and that betrays them to all Degrees and Kinds of Wickedness, trains them up to the Gallows, or fills our other Hospitals with Vagrants and miserable People.

There is nothing, which all wise Commonwealths have been more concerned for, than the Education of Children, which proves a great Support, and gives great Ease and Security to any Government, by breeding up useful Members of it : So that this is a Charity, which would in a great measure make some other Charities less needful ; and it is certainly a greater Charity to prevent the Miseries of Mankind, than to relieve them.

This is a Charity wherein every Member of this great City is most nearly concerned, because they and no others have a Right to it. It is a Provision for their Posterity, against all the sudden Strokes of Fortune, which no Man can be secured from : Here it is that Families, which are unexpectedly ruined by the uncertain Chances of Trade, may be raised again by Charity ; at least, by that Virtue and Industry, which their Education

P 3

teaches

teaches them, and those fair Advantages with which, according to their several Capacities, they are placed in the World; they have a new Opportunity given them of trying a better Fortune, or rather a more propitious Providence. So that every Citizen is concerned to promote and enlarge this Charity, because no Man knows who shall want it, if not for his Children, yet for his Grandchildren, or remoter Descendents; and possibly to Men, who are sensible of the uncertain Changes of the World, and have a religious Reverence for the divine Providence, it would be no mean Argument to promote this Charity, were Care taken that the Descendents of Benefactors, if ever they should want this Charity, should certainly have it.

It is certainly for the Honour of this great City, to make the best Provision it can for the Children of unfortunate Citizens; and those on whom Providence has smiled, while they have seen their Neighbours shipwrecked by such unavoidable Accidents as no Prudence or Conduct could escape, cannot make a more proper Acknowledgment of the divine Goodness than this.

I shall add but one thing more of this Nature. This is the only Charity which is most likely to raise a Fund of Charity: Among such great Numbers as have their Education in this Place, there have been, and we may reasonably hope there always will be, not a few,

few, who will raise their Fortunes in the World, and remember their Beginning was Charity. I am sure such Men ought to do so, and then such an Hospital as this, may help to support and enlarge itself, and in time raise new Hospitals, for new Colonies of Charity.

But while I plead for *Christ's Hospital*, I would not be thought to divert the whole Current of Charity into this one Channel; as Things now are, there is absolute Necessity of other Charities: The Sick, Diseased, and Maimed, are great Objects of Charity, especially Soldiers and Seamen, who venture their Lives, and lose their Health and their Limbs in the Service of their Country, to defend our Fortunes, Liberties, Lives, and Religion. There is none of us, but would think it a very poor Recompence for the Loss of Health and Limbs, to be cured upon Charity; it is certainly the least that we can do for them; so very little, that if it be Charity to do it, it is Barbarity to deny it, and that is but a very small degree of Charity, which is but one Remove from Barbarity itself.

As for other sick, and diseased, and lame People, who cannot be at the Charge of a Cure, where Sickness, Disability, and Poverty meet, this makes them double Objects of Charity, especially (as it often happens) when these Disabilities fall upon the Industrious, who before supported themselves and their

Families by honest Labours without Charity.

Nay, as for those who may be justly thought the least Objects of Charity, the Wicked and Vicious, who reap the deserved Fruits of their own Wickedness, I am sure, they are the Objects of the greatest Pity, because this Life will not end their Miseries; and if we can prolong their Lives here to save their Souls, it will be Charity indeed; and what Effect the Sense of their Wickedness and Sufferings, and the Grace of God may have upon them, no Man can tell.

As for distracted Persons, I believe, no Man, who considers what a Blessing Reason and Understanding is, and what a Misery the want of it is, can think of them without the most sensible Compassion: I think all other Evils whatsoever are to be preferred before it, and therefore to restore them to their Senses again, which we hear by the Blessing of God is often done, or however, to keep them from doing themselves or others any Injury, and to preserve human Nature from that Contempt which such public Spectacles expose it to, is a very extraordinary Charity.

Now all this shews, that a charitable Man need not be at any great Loss how to dispose of his Charity; here are too many very proper Objects of Charity, (if God so pleased) and we ought to be very thankful to God, that

we

we ourselves are not in the Number ; for *it is more blessed to give, than to receive.*

But then the great Numbers of miserable People, who in several kinds want our Charity, is a very powerful Argument to greater Liberality and Bounty. For this I must add to what I have already said concerning the Measures and Proportions of Charity, that a truly charitable Mind will increase its Proportions according to present Wants ; will sometimes abridge itself even in the Conveniences of Life, to supply great and pressing Necessities ; for a great Love, will not only spare what it easily can, but when there is great Reason for it, will deny itself, to do good.

And here I intended to have represented to you our Apostle's Arguments for a liberal and bountiful Charity ; but I fear I have already too much trespassed ; and where there is a willing Mind, so many and so great Objects of Charity are themselves very pressing Arguments. And therefore, as the Apostle endeavours to inspire his *Corinthians* with an holy Emulation of the Zeal and Forwardness of the Churches of *Macedonia*, *how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality* ; so I shall only desire you to emulate the great Examples of past and present Times, and that you would set as great Examples for time to come. If any thing deserves our Emulation, great and generous Charities

rities do, which are a Resemblance and Imitation of the divine Goodness, than which nothing can more endear us to God or Man: We owe all our present Foundations to royal Bounty and private Charities; and Thanks be to God, our present Age, as bad as it is, is not without some great Examples; and though true Virtue is void of the Pride, and Vanity, and Envy, and Jealousies of earthly Rivals, yet it fires at great Examples, and is ashamed to be out-done by Equals in love to God or Men; especially when the Honour of the Church, whereof they are Members, and the Religion, which they profess, is concerned.

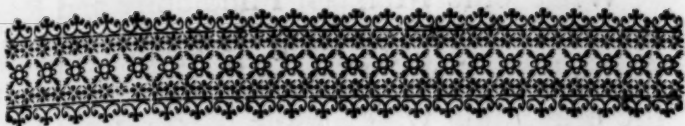
It is well known how many pious and charitable Foundations are owing to Popish Superstition; they hoped to expiate their Sins and to merit Heaven by their good Works, and in this Hope, and this Persuasion, they did a very great many. We understand better than to think of meriting any thing of God, much less of purchasing a liberty of Sinning, by Acts of Charity; but if those great Rewards which are promised to Charity, and which we profess to believe, will not make us charitable, without the Opinion of Merit and Satisfaction; Charity is so great and excellent a Virtue, and so very useful to Mankind; that at least thus far Popery will be thought the better Religion; and therefore as the Apostle argues, *as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance,*

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ance, and knowledge, and all diligence, and in your love to us ; see that ye abound in this grace also : As we have a more orthodox Faith, a clearer and a distincter Knowledge, and a purer Worship than the Church of Rome, let us excel in Charity too ; and convince the World, that to renounce Popery, is not to renounce good Works.



S E R.



S E R M O N X.

Preached before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen at *Guild-hall* Chapel, on *Sunday, April 25. 1697.*

COLOSS. ii. 8.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

HAD St. *Paul* lived in our Age, it would have required little less than the Courage and Bravery of the Spirit of Martyrdom to have said this: And nothing but the Authority of so great an Apostle (which though some Men do not much value, yet they dare not openly despise) can screen those who venture to say it after him.

What

What some Men call Philosophy and Reason (and there is nothing so foolish and absurd which some Men will not call so) is the only thing which those Men adore, who would either have no God, or a God and a Religion of their own making. And what Attempts some have made to undermine all Religion, and others to corrupt and transform the whole Frame of the Christian Religion, upon a Pretence of its contradicting natural Reason and Philosophy, is too well known to need a Proof. That thus it was in his days, and that thus it was likely to be in future Ages, *St. Paul* was very sensible, when he gave this Caution to his *Colossians*; and I am sure it is as proper a Caution for us, as ever it was for any Age since the writing of this Epistle; for this vain Pretence to Reason and Philosophy never more prevailed, and never did more mischief to the World.

It is an endless and fruitless Task to go about to confute all the absurd Hypotheses and wild inconsistent Reasonings wherewith Men abuse themselves and others: The Experience of so many Ages wherein Philosophy was in all its Glory, (and the several Sects disputed and wrangled eternally, without ending any one Controversy) gives no great Encouragement to hope for much this way; at least it can never be expected, that ordinary Christians should be better instructed and confirmed

confirmed in the Faith by Philosophical Disputes.

The Christian Religion has from the very Beginning been corrupted by a Mixture of Philosophy : Thus it was in the Apostles Days, and thus it has been more or less in all Ages of the Church to this Day ; and the Direction the Apostle gives for the Security of the Christian Faith, is, not to dispute such Matters, but to distinguish between Philosophical Disputes, and Matters of Revelation ; and to reject all the Pretences of Philosophy, when it does or seems to contradict the Faith of Christ, or would make any corrupt Additions to it.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit ; συλαγωγῶν, is to make a Prey, or to carry away as a Prey ; that is, to seduce them from the Christian Faith, or from the Purity and Simplicity of it ; through philosophy and vain deceit ; that is, through the vain deceit of philosophy, which cheats Men with a flattering but empty Appearance ; may unsettle weak Minds, but cannot lay a sure and solid Foundation of Faith ; may cheat Men out of their Faith, but when that is done, can give them nothing certain in the room of it : For it is but after the traditions of men, and after the rudiments of this world : Some of these Doctrines may possibly plead Prescription, as having been so long received, that no Man knows their Original ; or if they have the
Authority

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Authority of some great Name, yet it is but a human Authority, and they are but *the traditions of Men*; and of Men, who at best had no better Information than from the visible Appearances of Nature, and their own imperfect Observations, and corrupt or defective Reasonings, *after the rudiments of this world*. And is this an Authority to oppose against the Faith of Christ, which both wants that divine Confirmation which he gave to his Doctrines, and contradicts them? For they are *not after Christ*, neither taught by Christ, nor consonant to what he taught.

These Words might afford great Variety of Discourse; but I shall confine myself to what is most useful, and reduce that into as narrow a Compass as I can, by shewing,

- I. What great Need there is of this Caution, to *beware lest any man spoil us through philosophy and vain deceit*.
- II. What great Reason we have to reject all these vain Pretences to Philosophy, when they are opposed to the Authority of a Divine Revelation.

I. As for the first of these, whoever considers what an Enemy these vain Pretences to Philosophy have always been to Religion, will see Need enough for this Caution.

True Reason, and the true Knowledge of Nature, which is true Philosophy, would certainly

certainly direct us to the Acknowledgment and Worship of that supreme Being who made the World: And yet we know, that there never was an Atheist without some Pretence to Philosophy, and generally such loud noisy Pretences too, as make ignorant People think them very notable Philosophers; and that tempts some vain empty Persons to affect Atheism, that they may be thought Philosophers.

That this is *vain deceit*, all Men must own, who believe there is a God: And if it be possible to pretend Philosophy for Atheism itself, it is no great Wonder if it be made to patronize Infidelity and Heresy: But this plainly shews, of what dangerous Consequence it is to admit philosophical Disputes into Religion, which if at any time they may do any Service to Religion, much oftner greatly corrupt it, and shake the very Foundations of it; of which more anon.

At present I shall only shew you how the Matter of Fact stands; that most of the Disputes in Religion are nothing else but the Disputes of Philosophy, and therefore, according to the apostolical Command, to be wholly flung out of Religion, and not suffered to affect our Faith one way or other. To be a Philosopher and a Christian, to dispute and to believe, are two very different Things; and yet it is very evident, that most of the Arguments against Revelation in ge-

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neral, and most of the Disputes about the particular Doctrines of Christianity, are no better than this *vain deceit of philosophy*; that were the Matters of Faith, and the Disputes of Philosophy truly distinguished, this alone would be sufficient to settle the Faith of Christians, and restore Peace and Unity, at least in the great Fundamentals of Religion, to the Christian World.

I. As to begin with Revelation in general. The Books of *Moses* are the most ancient, and that considered, the best attested History in the World; the whole Nation of the *Jews*, whose History he writes, pay the greatest Veneration to him; and if we believe the Matters of Fact which he relates, he was certainly an inspired Man, who could neither deceive, nor be deceived. And it is impossible to have greater Evidence for the Truth and Authenticalness of any Writings, at such a distance of Time, than we have for the Writings of the *New Testament*; and indeed the Infidels of our Age have very little to say purely against the Credibility of the History; and then one would think, that all their other Objections should come too late, unless they will justify *Pharaoh* in disbelieving *Moses*, and the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* in disbelieving our Saviour, after all the Miracles they did: For if they will disbelieve *Moses* and Christ, though they have nothing material to object against the Truth of these Histories;

Histories ; nothing, which they would allow to be good Objections against any other History ; they must by the same Reason have disbelieved them, though they had seen them do all those great Works which are reported of them in such credible Histories. But whatever the Authority of these Books are, they think they may securely reject them, if they contain any thing which contradicts their Reason and Philosophy, and they find a great many such things to quarrel with : They think *Moses's* History of the Creation very unphilosophical ; that the Story of *Eve* and the Serpent is an incredible Fiction ; that the universal Deluge is absolutely impossible, and irreconcilable with the Principles of Philosophy ; and it does not become Philosophers to have recourse to Miracles ; that what we call Miracles are not the Effects of a divine Power, but may be resolved into natural Causes ; that Inspiration and Prophecy is nothing but natural Enthusiasm, and all the Pretences to Revelation a Cheat and Imposture ; that Nature teaches us all that we need to know ; that there is no other certain Knowledge but this ; that we are not bound to believe any thing which our own Reason cannot grasp and comprehend, and therefore Revelation is perfectly useless ; and God himself cannot oblige us to believe any thing which does not agree with the Reason of our Minds, and the Philosophy of Na-

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ture. Those who understand the Mystery of modern Infidelity, know that these, and such like, are the wise Reasons for which they reject and ridicule all revealed Religion, and endeavour to rob and spoil Men of one of the greatest Blessings in the World, a divine Revelation. So that Infidelity is resolved into these vain Pretences to Philosophy, that Men will understand how to make, destroy, and govern the World better than God.

2. As these Men oppose Reason and Philosophy to Revelation, so others either deny the fundamental Articles of Christianity for the sake of some philosophical Difficulties, or corrupt the Doctrines of Christianity by a Mixture of Philosophy. The Gospel of our Saviour is the plainest Revelation of the Will of God that ever was made to the World; all its Doctrines are easily understood, without Art and Subtilty; and yet there is not a more nice, intricate, perplexed Thing in the World, than what some Men have made the Christian Faith: All the subtil Disputes of Philosophy are brought into the Church; and *Plato* and *Aristotle* are become as great Apostles, as *St. Peter* or *St. Paul*: As to give some few Instances of it; for Time will not permit me to discourse it at large.

What are the *Arian*, *Socinian*, *Pelagian* Controversies, but mere philosophical Disputes, with which these Hereticks corrupted the Catholic Faith?

There

There is nothing more plain and exprefs in Scripture, than the Faith of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, or the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity*; and that great Art and Subtilty which has been uſed, and to ſo little Purpoſe, to pervert thoſe Texts of Scripture, wherein this Doctrine is contained, is an evident Proof, that this is the plain, natural, obvious Senſe of thoſe Texts, ſince it requires ſo much Art and Criticiſm to put any other Senſe on them; and that will not do neither, till Men are reſolved rather to make any thing of Scripture, than to find a *real Trinity* there. If then this Faith be ſo plainly contained in Scripture, what makes all this Diſpute about it? What makes thoſe, who profeſs to believe the Scripture, ſo obſtinate againſt this Faith? Truly that which makes ſome Men Infidels, makes others Hereticks, that is, a vain Pretence to Philoſophy.

The firſt philoſophical Diſpute is about the divine Unity: We all own with the Scripture, that there is but one God; but we ſay further, as the Scripture teaches us, *That there are Three, Father Son, and Holy Ghoſt, each of which is true and perfect God.* This they ſay is a Contradiſtion; and if it be ſo, there is an End of this Faith, for both Parts of a Contradiſtion cannot be true: But to be Three and One upon different Accounts, and in different Senſes, is no Contradiſtion; for thus Three may be One, and One Three; and this

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is all the Scripture teaches, or that we profess to believe, whatever the Mystery of this Distinction and Unity be: But this will not satisfy the philosophical Wits, unless they can comprehend how Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are really and distinctly Three, and essentially One, the Manner of which the Scripture gives no Account of, and therefore this is no Dispute in Faith, but only in Philosophy.

Another Objection concerns the divine Generation, how God can beget a Son of his own Substance; which the *Arians* thought inferred a Division of the Divine Substance.

And a third Objection concerns an eternal Generation: How it is possible that the Father should beget an eternal Son; that the Son should be begotten without any Beginning of Being; and that the Father should not be at least some few Moments before the Son, and consequently the Son not eternal. Now we all grant, that we can give no philosophical Account of this, no more than we can of the simple divine Essence, or of Eternity itself; but we may believe that God has an eternal Son, as we do that there is an eternal God, without knowing how any thing is eternal: These are Disputes in Philosophy, and such as none but vain Men will dispute about, as being acknowledged above our Comprehension, and therefore no reasonable Objection against our Faith.

Thus

Thus as for the Doctrine of the Incarnation, nothing can be plainer in Scripture, than that *the Son of God was made man*; That *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*; That *God was manifest in the flesh*: And all the Disputes about this Article are purely Philosophical: Some Men reject it, because they cannot understand how God and Man can be united in one Person? Others confound the divine and human Nature as *Eutyches* did; or divide the Persons, as *Nestorius* did; both which indeed destroy the Article of the Incarnation; for the Word is not made Flesh, unless the same Person, who is God, is Man too, and continues perfect God and perfect Man after this Union: But all these Disputes concern the Philosophy of the Union of the divine and human Nature in Christ; and if we would separate between Faith and Philosophy, such Disputes might soon be ended.

Thus most of the Difficulties in the *Pelagian* and *Quinquarticular* Controversy, are ultimately resolved into mere philosophical Disputes about Fate and Prescience, Liberty and Necessity, and God's Concourse with Creatures, or the Powers of Nature and Grace: And would Time permit, it were easy to shew this in most of the Controversies of Religion, that it is not what God has revealed, and what he requires us to believe, but such nice philosophical Questions as Men

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raise about these Matters, which occasion all these Disputes.

It has often been proposed as a means of Union, to silence all Disputes, to confine ourselves to Scripture Words and Expressions, without determining the Signification of them: But this would make only an Agreement in Words, not a Consent in Opinions; nor could it secure the Peace of the Church, while all Men knew, that under the same Form of Words, they had very different and contrary Meanings, which would still make them as much Hereticks to each other, as if their Words did as expressly contradict each other, as their Faith. But would Men reduce all their Disputes to Scripture, and make that the only Rule of their Faith, without intermixing any philosophical Disputes with it, this would be an infallible Means of Union; for it is only this vain Pretence to Philosophy, which raises all these Disputes, and then tempts Men to pervert the Scriptures to justify their Philosophy.

In all these Cases we are concerned to inquire what the true Sense of the Article is; for this the Scripture teaches, and so far our Faith is concerned; and these are not only justifiable, but necessary Disputes, if the true Faith be necessary: And such were the Disputes of the Catholic Fathers with the *Sabelian*, *Arian*, and *Photinian* Hereticks; whether Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were only
three

three Names, or three Appearances or Manifestations of the same one single Person, or any other three, but three true, proper, coeternal, and coequal Persons : Or whether He, who is in Scripture called the Son of God, be a Creature, though the most excellent Creature ; or a Son, and God by Nature, truly begotten of his Father's Substance : Or whether Christ be God incarnate, or a meer Man : And their ancient Creeds pretended to no more, than to teach what the Catholic Faith was, not to expound the Philosophy of the Trinity and Incarnation. And thus far we must explain the Faith, as to know, and to let others know, what it is we believe ; and if to assert the ancient Catholic Faith against old and new Heresies, should be called new Explications, we cannot help it ; for we must explain what the Scripture teaches about these Articles, and how the Catholic Church always understood them : But that which we are to beware of, is, not to mix Philosophy with our Faith, nor to admit of any mere philosophical Objections against the Faith, nor to attempt any Explications of these Mysteries, beyond what the Scriptures and the Faith and Practice of the Catholic Church will justify.

Indeed the Importunity of Hereticks did very often engage the Catholic Fathers in philosophical Disputes ; but this they did, not to explain the Christian Mysteries by Philosophy,

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fophy, but only to shew, that as incomprehensible as these Myſteries are, the Philoſophy of Hereticks, and their Objections againſt theſe Articles, were very abſurd: And ſuch Diſputes as theſe may ſometimes be abſolutely neceſſary, and of great Uſe to ſhame theſe vain Pretences to Philoſophy, while we do not put the Trial of our Faith upon this Iſſue.

II. Let us now conſider what great Reaſon we have to reject all the vain Pretences to Reaſon and Philoſophy, when oppoſed to a divine Revelation. For that is all the Apoſtle intends in this Caution; not to diſcourage the Uſe of Reaſon, or the Study of Philoſophy, which are great Improvements, and a delightful Entertainment of human Minds, and with a wiſe and prudent Conduct may be very ſerviceable to Religion too; but we muſt not ſet up any Concluſions in Philoſophy againſt the Chriſtian Faith, nor corrupt the Faith with a Mixture of Philoſophy, nor reject any revealed Truths, for want of natural Ideas to conceive them by.

To ſhorten this Diſcourſe as much as I can, I ſhall at preſent only ſhew you what Reaſon we have to believe thoſe Doctrines which are thought the moſt myſterious and inconceivable, notwithſtanding any Objections from natural Reaſon and Philoſophy againſt them. And the Account of this muſt be reſolved into the Nature, Uſe, and Authority

rity of Revelation; that Revelation as to such Matters as are knowable only by Revelation, must serve instead of Sense, natural Ideas, and natural Reason; that is, that we must believe Things which we do not see, Things which we have no natural Notion or Conception of, Things which are not evident to natural Reason; for without this, there is little Use of Faith, no Authority of pure Revelation.

It is true, the general Corruption of Mankind made it very necessary for God to revive the Laws of Nature, and to reinforce the Observation of them by his own Authority and Command; but the proper Work of Revelation is to discover such things to us as Nature cannot teach, of which we have no natural Notion, nor any natural Evidence; At least, thus it may be, if God knows more than natural Reason teaches; or can comprehend; and thinks it fit to reveal such supernatural Truths to us, when he sees it useful for Mankind.

Now if God ever does reveal such things to us, if we believe upon God's Authority (which is the strict Notion of a divine Faith) we must believe without any natural Evidence, merely because God has revealed it; and then we must believe such things as are not evident to Sense and Reason; and then it can be no Objection against Revelation, nor against the Belief of any such supernatural Truths, that we have no natural Notion, nor natural
Evidence

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Evidence of them, that they are what we cannot conceive and comprehend.

To believe no farther than natural Reason can conceive and comprehend, is to reject the divine Authority of Revelation, and to destroy the Distinction between Reason and Faith. He who will believe no farther than Nature and Reason approves, believes his Reason, not the Revelation; and is in truth a Natural Philosopher, not a Believer: He believes the Scriptures, as he would believe *Plato* and *Tully*; not as inspired Writings, but as agreeable to Reason, and the Result of wise and deep Thoughts; and this puts an end to all the Disputes about Faith and Revelation at once: For what use is there of Faith? What matter whether the Scriptures be divinely inspired or not, when we are no farther concerned with them than with other human Writings, to believe what they teach agreeable to our own Reason? Let these Men then either reject Faith and Scripture, or confess that Revelation, as to all supernatural Truths, must serve us instead of Sense and Reason. I would gladly know of them, whether they would not believe such supernatural Truths, as are not evident to Reason, were they sure that God had revealed them? I guess they will not be so hardy as to say, that they would not believe God himself, should he reveal such things as their Reason cannot comprehend; and if they would believe God in such Matters, why will they

they not believe a Revelation which they themselves acknowledge to be Divine, in such Matters ? For is there any Difference between believing God, and believing a divine Revelation ? If God does know, and can reveal such Mysteries, and is to be believed when he does reveal them, and such Doctrines are contained in an undoubted Revelation ; then the unconceivableness of them can be no Argument against the Truth of the Revelation, or that Sense of the Words, which contains such Mysteries.

Let us then consider the natural Consequence of this, which is of great Moment in this Dispute, *viz.* that we must allow of no Objections against revealed Mysteries, which we will not allow to be good Objections against Sense and Reason ; which is a necessary and unavoidable Consequence, if Revelation, with respect to supernatural Truths, stand in the Place of Sense and Reason.

Now no Man questions the Truth of what he sees and feels, or what he can prove to be true by plain and undeniable Reason, merely because there are unconceivable Difficulties in it ; as there are in every thing, even the most certain and familiar things in Nature : And if revealed Truths are not more unconceivable than many natural Objects of Sense and Reason, why should their being unconceivable be a greater Objection against believing a Revelation, than it is against believing our Sense and Reason.

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To believe no farther than natural Reason can conceive and comprehend, is to reject the divine Authority of Revelation, and to destroy the Distinction between Reason and Faith. He who will believe no farther than Nature and Reason approves, believes his Reason, not the Revelation; and is in truth a Natural Philosopher, not a Believer: He believes the Scriptures, as he would believe *Plato* and *Tully*; not as inspired Writings, but as agreeable to Reason, and the Result of wise and deep Thoughts; and this puts an end to all the Disputes about Faith and Revelation at once: For what use is there of Faith? What matter whether the Scriptures be divinely inspired or not, when we are no farther concerned with them than with other human Writings, to believe what they teach agreeable to our own Reason? Let these Men then either reject Faith and Scripture, or confess that Revelation, as to all supernatural Truths, must serve us instead of Sense and Reason. I would gladly know of them, whether they would not believe such supernatural Truths, as are not evident to Reason, were they sure that God had revealed them? I guess they will not be so hardy as to say, that they would not believe God himself, should he reveal such things as their Reason cannot comprehend; and if they would believe God in such Matters, why will they

they not believe a Revelation which they themselves acknowledge to be Divine, in such Matters ? For is there any Difference between believing God, and believing a divine Revelation ? If God does know, and can reveal such Mysteries, and is to be believed when he does reveal them, and such Doctrines are contained in an undoubted Revelation ; then the unconceivableness of them can be no Argument against the Truth of the Revelation, or that Sense of the Words, which contains such Mysteries.

Let us then consider the natural Consequence of this, which is of great Moment in this Dispute, *viz.* that we must allow of no Objections against revealed Mysteries, which we will not allow to be good Objections against Sense and Reason ; which is a necessary and unavoidable Consequence, if Revelation, with respect to supernatural Truths, stand in the Place of Sense and Reason.

Now no Man questions the Truth of what he sees and feels, or what he can prove to be true by plain and undeniable Reason, merely because there are unconceivable Difficulties in it ; as there are in every thing, even the most certain and familiar things in Nature : And if revealed Truths are not more unconceivable than many natural Objects of Sense and Reason, why should their being unconceivable be a greater Objection against believing a Revelation, than it is against believing our Sense and Reason.

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Reason in Matters equally unconceivable? When God has revealed to us, that he has an eternal and only begotten Son, though we cannot comprehend the Mystery of the eternal Generation, why should we not as firmly believe it, as we do, that Man begets a Son in his own Likeness, the Philosophy of which we as little understand: Nor can we any more conceive the Union of the Soul and Body, than we do the Incarnation of the Son of God, or the Union of the divine and human Nature in one Person. And if we own the Authority of Revelation, why should we not as well believe what Revelation teaches, how unconceivable soever it be, as we do what Sense and Reason teaches, though it be alike unconceivable.

All Men are sensible, that it is very absurd and foolish to deny the Being of any thing which they have certain Evidence of, because they cannot comprehend the Nature and Reasons of it: The Man who rose up and walked before the Philosopher, who was disputing subtilly against the Possibility of Motion, put a Scorn upon all his Arguments, by shewing him that he could move: And therefore we see, that all Men believe their Senses and Reason against all the Difficulties in Nature, and will never be persuaded, by the subtlest Disputant, that that is not, which they certainly see and know to be. Now for the same Reason, if Men will allow the Authority

thority of Rēvelation, they must believe what is revealed, how unconceivable and incomprehensible soever its Nature be ; for when we know what a thing is, (and this may be known by Revelation as well as by Sense, as those Men must confess, who acknowledge a divine Revelation) no Difficulties in conceiving it, must persuade us to deny that it is.

This is very plain in itself, though few Men consider it, that to disbelieve what is revealed, for the sake of any Difficulties in understanding or conceiving it, is to reject the Certainty of Revelation ; for what other Account can be given of that Difference Men make between the Evidence of Sense and Reason, and of Revelation, but that they allow Sense and Reason to be good and certain Proofs of the Being of such things as are evident to Sense and Reason, how mysterious soever their Natures are ; but that mere Revelation is no certain Proof of the Being of any thing which is not evident also to Sense and Reason, how plainly soever it be revealed ; that is, that Revelation alone can prove nothing ; for if Revelation itself could prove the Certainty of what is revealed, the Difficulties in Nature and Philosophy could no more disprove a Revelation, than confute our Senses. Now let any Man judge, whether this be not unequal Usage, to expect more from Revelation, than they do from Sense and
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and Reason, and not to believe Revelation upon the same Terms that they believe their Senses.

Should Men resolve to believe nothing which they see, till they could give a philosophical Account of the Reasons, and Causes, and Natures of all they see, as they refuse to believe a Revelation any farther than they can conceive and comprehend the Thing revealed, they must of necessity be as great Scepticks, as they are Infidels. For as for Contradictions, it is an easy matter to make or find seeming Contradictions in what we do not understand ; for when we know not the philosophical Natures of Things, nor how they act, and yet will be reasoning and guessing at them, all our false Guesses may be full of Contradictions and Impossibilities, because we know not the true Mystery of Nature. It is this vain Humour of criticizing upon Nature which makes so many Atheists. They go upon the same Principle with Infidels and Hereticks, to believe nothing which natural Reason cannot conceive and comprehend ; now they cannot comprehend the Notion and Idea of a God, which they say, is made up of Contradictions and Impossibilities, and therefore they reject the Being of a God : They cannot conceive a creating Power, which can give Being to that which had no Being before, which they think a plain Contradiction to make Something of Nothing ; and therefore they

they reject the Creation of the World, and either assert the Eternity of the World, or at least the Eternity of Matter : They can conceive no Substance but Matter and Body, and therefore reject the Notion of a Spirit, as Nonsense and Contradiction : They will allow nothing to be wisely made, which they understand not the Reason and Uses of, and therefore they fancy a great many Botches and Blunders in Nature, which cannot be the Designs and Contrivance of Wisdom, but the Effects of Chance; and then the Consequence is plain, that the World was made by Chance, not by a wise Author.

Now, I confess, if this way of Reasoning be allowed, it will be impossible to defend either Sense, or Reason, or Revelation, against the Cavils of Atheists and Infidels; for there are unconceivable and incomprehensible Secrets and Mysteries in them all; and if to conceive and comprehend the Natures of Things, must be made the Measure and Standard of true and false, we must deny our Senses and Reason, as well as our Faith; and if we do and must believe our Sense and Reason beyond our Comprehension, why must we believe nothing that is revealed any farther than we can conceive and comprehend the Nature and Reason of it?

The Sum is this : Human Knowledge, whatever the Means of knowing be, whether Sense, or Reason, or Revelation, does not

reach to the philosophical Causes and Natures of Things, but only to their Being and natural Virtues and Powers; and as a wise Man, who knows the Measure of his Understanding, expects no more from Sense and Reason, than to know what Things are in the World, and what they are, as far as they fall under the Notice of Sense and natural Reason; so we must expect no more from Revelation, than the Knowledge of such Things as Sense and natural Reason cannot discover. But we must no more expect the Philosophy of supernatural Truths from Revelation, than we do the Mysteries of Nature from Sense and Reason.

Now since human Knowledge is not a Knowledge of the mysterious Natures of Things, but only to know what Things there are, and what they are; there can be no Contradiction between Sense and Reason, and Revelation, unless one denies what the other affirms; not that one teaches more than the other teaches, or that one cannot comprehend what the other teaches. Reason teaches more than Sense teaches, or can comprehend; and Revelation teaches more than either Sense or natural Reason teaches, or can comprehend; but this is no Contradiction, but only a Subordination between these different Kinds and Degrees of Knowledge; but as for Unconceivableness and Incomprehensibility, that is no Argument against any thing; for Sense and natural Reason can no more comprehend
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their own Objects, than they do what is revealed: And it is manifest Perverseness to make that an Objection against Revelation, which we will not allow to be an Objection against Sense and Reason.

This is sufficient as to the Reason of the Thing; but as far as it is possible to remove Mens Prejudices also against believing Mysteries, I shall briefly answer two very popular Objections.

1. It is thought very unnatural, that when God has made us reasonable Creatures, and therefore made natural Reason to us the Measure of Truth and Falshood, he should require us to believe without Reason; as we must do if he reveals such Things to us as we know not, and cannot possibly know the Reasons of. If we must believe with our Understanding, how can we believe Things which we cannot understand?

This were a reasonable Objection, were it true; for we cannot believe what we have no knowledge nor understanding of; for Faith is Knowledge, though not natural Knowledge.

But do we not understand what it is we believe? Do we not know what we mean, when we say we believe in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Nay, do not our Adversaries understand what we mean by it? How then come they to charge us with believing Contradictions and Impossibilities? For if they know not what we believe, they cannot know

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whether we believe Contradictions or not. And if we do understand what it is we believe, then we do not believe without Understanding, which is absolutely impossible, if we know what it is we believe.

And we know also why we believe: Our Faith is founded in Sense and Reason, and resolved into the Authority of God, which is the highest and most infallible Reason. The Miracles which Christ and his Apostles wrought, were evident to Sense, and owned by Reason to be the Effects of a divine Power; and the Answer the blind Man gave to the *Pharisees*, when Christ had opened his Eyes, speaks the true Sense of Nature: *Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind: If this man were not of God he could do nothing,* John ix. 30, 31, 32, 33. And all Mankind own, that the most absolute Faith is due to God, and to those who speak from God; and this, as I take it, is to believe with Reason.

But still we believe such Things, whose Natures we do not understand, and cannot account for by natural Reason, and this is to believe without Reason. We believe that God the Father hath an eternal Son, and an eternal Spirit; and that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,

Ghost, are but one eternal God; but this is what natural Reason cannot comprehend, nor give us any Notion or Conception of, how God can have an eternal Son, and an eternal Spirit, really distinct from himself, and yet with himself one eternal and infinite God: Reason can give no Account of the eternal Generation of the Son, nor of the eternal Procession of the Holy Spirit; and is not this to believe without Reason, which a reasonable Creature ought not to do, and which we ought not to think that God, who made us reasonable Creatures, expects from us.

And this I grant would be a material Objection, were Reason the Judge of the Nature and Philosophy of Things; and did Reason require us to believe nothing but what we understand and comprehend. But then we must no more believe Sense and Reason, than Revelation; for we do not comprehend the Nature of any one thing in the World, how evident soever it is to Sense and Reason, that there are such Things. Nature is as great a Mystery as Revelation, and it is no greater Affront to our Understandings, no more against Reason, for God to reveal such Things to us as our Reason cannot comprehend, than it is to make a whole World, which Reason cannot comprehend.

When we make it an Objection against any thing, that is without Reason, or as we apprehend, against Reason, and contrary to

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Reason ; we must first consider whether it be the proper Object of Reason, otherwise it is no Objection ; as it is no Objection against Sounds, that we cannot see them ; nor against Colours, that we cannot hear them ; because Sounds are not the Objects of Sight, nor Colours of Hearing.

Now no Man pretends, that the pure Natures and Essences of Things, or their essential Reasons, Properties, Unions, Operations, are the Objects of human Reason ; for no Man living knows any thing about them.

And yet this is all the Incomprehensibility Men have to complain of in the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Incarnation ; that they comprehend, how God beget an eternal Son ; nor how Three divine Persons should be so united, as to be essentially One God ; nor how the divine and human Nature can be united into one Person, God-Man ; all which concern the Essence, and essential Properties, Operations, Unions, Relations, of the Deity, which a modest Man might allow to be incomprehensible, if God be infinite, though he could comprehend the Natures, Essences, and essential Reasons and Properties of created Beings ; but when all created Nature is such a Mystery to us, that we know not the pure Nature and Essence of any one thing in the World, is it an Affront to our Reason, that we cannot comprehend the Divine Nature ?

Such Matters as these are neither without Reason, nor against Reason, nor contrary to Reason ;

Reason ; because Reason has nothing to do with them, and can take no Cognizance of them : They belong not to Reason, but to that infinite Mind, which comprehends itself, and the Ideas of all possible Beings. A perfect comprehensive Knowledge of Nature belongs only to the Maker of all things ; for it is not only to know what Things are, but how to make them ; which would be a vain Curiosity and useless Knowledge to those, who have not a making and creating Power. This is to know Things *à priori*, with an intuitive ideal Knowledge, which is infinitely more superior to Reason, than Reason is to Sense : And it is the Affectation of this intuitive making Knowledge, which makes some Men Atheists, and others Hereticks.

2. Another great Objection against such a Revelation as contains Matters which natural Reason cannot comprehend, is, To what Purpose such a Revelation serves ? What Merit there can be in believing such Doctrines ? And of what good Use such a Faith can be to us ?

Now I confess I cannot think it meritorious merely to believe Things which are incomprehensible ; or that God any more intended to puzzle our Faith with revealed Mysteries, than to puzzle our Reason in making a mysterious World. Whether we receive our Information from Sense, or na-

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tural Reason, or Revelation, it is certain we must believe Myſteries, if we believe any thing ; for all things have ſomething myſterious and incomprehenſible in their Natures ; what natural Reason cannot account for, and what God never intended we ſhould underſtand : For God never intended to teach us how to make the World, nor how every Creature was made ; and therefore we cannot and are not concerned to know the internal Frame and Conſtitution of Nature.

But though neither natural nor revealed Knowledge extends to the Reaſons and Cauſes of Nature, and of eſſential Properties and Operations ; yet both natural and revealed Knowledge is of as much Uſe to us, as if we did perfectly underſtand all the ſecret and incomprehenſible Myſteries of the Nature of God, or of the Natures of Creatures. Both natural and revealed Knowledge are alike upon this account. That they only acquaint us what Things are, and what Ends they ſerve ; and then we know what Uſe to make of them, without underſtanding the ſecret Myſteries of Nature.

Is this World, or any thing in it, the leſs uſeful to us, becauſe we cannot conceive how God created all things of Nothing ? Or becauſe we do not underſtand the Nature of Matter, nor how the ſeveral Parts of Matter came by their different Virtues and Qualities ? Is Corn, or Fruit, or Herbs the leſs nourish-
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ing or refreshing, because we know not how they grow? Does it require any Philosophy to know how to eat, and drink, and sleep? Will not our Food nourish us, unless we understand how it is concocted and turned into Chyle, and Blood, and Spirits? Nay, is it of no Use to know that God is an Eternal, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent Being, unless we can conceive how any Being can be eternal without a Cause, and without a Beginning? or can comprehend how he can do and know all things, and be present in all Places at once, without Extension, and without Parts? We may make all the Use that can be made of this World, and of every thing in it, without understanding the essential Reasons and Causes, or internal Nature of any thing; and we must do so, if we will make any Use of it; and we know God, to all the Ends and Purposes for which Creatures ought to know God, though his Nature be incomprehensible.

And thus it is in Matters of pure Revelation, such as the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Incarnation; how unaccountable soever the Mystery of a Trinity in Unity, the eternal Generation, and the Incarnation of the Son of God be, yet it is the most useful Knowledge in the World: Though we know not how the eternal Father begat an eternal Son of his own Substance, nor how this eternal Son in time became Man; yet it is the
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most defireable Knowledge in the World to Sinners, to know, that God has an eternal Son; and *that he so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son for the redemption of mankind, that whosoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life*; and that this eternal Son of God became Man, lived a poor, necessitous, laborious Life, and died an accursed Death for the Salvation of Sinners; and to know, that the Holy Spirit, which proceeds from Father and Son, dwells in the Christian Church, and quickens and animates the whole Body of Christ. If this be true (as we must suppose in this Argument) all Mankind must confess, that this is a very useful Knowledge; and never the less useful, because a Trinity in Unity, and the eternal Generation, and the Incarnation of the Son of God, are great and unconceivable Mysteries. Could we give a rational and philosophical Account of the eternal Generation, and of the Incarnation, we should know more than we now do; but Faith makes it as useful to all the Purposes of Religion as the most perfect intuitive Knowledge could do.

This is a sufficient Answer to that Objection against the Usefulness of such Mysteries as have something incomprehensible and unconceivable in their Natures: Which is an equal Objection against all created Nature, which is but one great Mystery; and yet the World is a very useful World, and we know

know in some good degree what Use to make of it : And the Knowledge 'of those Gospel Mysteries which are the Subject of our present Dispute, are manifestly of infinite Use to us, if the certain Knowledge of the Pardon of Sin, and eternal Life, by the Obedience, and Sufferings, and Death, and Intercession of the Son of God incarnate, be of any Use ; and therefore it became the Wisdom and Goodness of God to reveal these Mysteries of Salvation to us.

Especially if we add to this, that the lapsed State of human Nature makes supernatural Knowledge necessary. Natural Knowledge we grant was sufficient for a State of Nature, though no Man would have had Reason to complain, had God in a State of Innocence, by a more familiar Intercourse with Man, or by the frequent Conversation of Angels, improved his Knowledge beyond the mere Attainments of his natural Faculties ; and it is not improbable, but this might have been. I am sure there is an impatient Thirst after Knowledge in human Nature, and such a great Curiosity for secret and hidden Mysteries, that it looks very unnatural for Men to complain, that God reveals more to them than Nature teaches.

But yet, I say, natural Knowledge must be allowed sufficient to all the Ends of human Life, while Man continued innocent ; for that is the original State of human Nature,

ture, as all Men must grant, who believe that Man was made by God.

But when Man sinned, he forfeited the Favour of God, and a natural Immortality; and whether he should be restored or not, and by what Means he should be restored, depended wholly on the sovereign Will and Pleasure of God: And therefore the Light of Nature, though it could direct an innocent Man how to please and worship God, and to preserve himself immortal, it could not teach Sinners how to make Atonement for Sin, nor give them any certain Hopes that God would forgive Sins, and bestow immortal Life on them; which makes it necessary, that the Religion of a Sinner be a revealed Religion. And if God in infinite Goodness is not only pleased to restore Sinners to Grace and Favour, but to advance them to a supernatural State of Perfection and Happiness both of Soul and Body in the next World, this must be done by supernatural Means, and therefore requires a supernatural Knowledge; for the Light of Nature can neither raise us above Nature, nor discover supernatural Truths to us: And this makes it necessary to know and believe such things, as we have no natural Notion or Idea of; *such things as neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.* If Nature cannot save us, it cannot discover to us the way of Salvation neither; and if
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we must be saved by a supernatural Grace and Power, it must be supernaturally revealed; and what is supernatural, is the Object of *Faith*, not of natural *Knowledge*.

This seems to me to give a plain Account, why God thinks fit to reveal such Mysteries to us as Nature cannot teach, and as we have no natural Notion of, because our lapsed State has made such supernatural Revelations necessary to the Recovery of Mankind; and when we are fallen below the Relief of Nature, and of natural Knowledge, we ought to be very thankful to our good God for supernatural Knowledge, and supernatural Means of Salvation.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, One eternal God, be Honour, Glory and Power, now and for ever. Amen.





S E R M O N XI.

The Folly and Unreasonableness of DEISM.

Preached before the King at *Hamp-ton-Court*, June 16, 1700.

JOHN xiv. i.

—Ye believe in God, believe also in me.

I SHALL not consider these Words as they relate to what follows, but only observe in them, that our Saviour not only requires his Disciples to believe in God, but that they should believe also in him; that is, to believe that he came from God, and hath revealed his Will to the World: And from hence I shall take Occasion to consider the Case of *Deists*, who pretend to own, that there is a God, and to pay such Worship to him, and to obey such

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such Laws, as mere Nature teaches, but reject all revealed Religions, even the Gospel of Christ itself, as no better than Cheats and Impostors.

This Profession of *Deism* is grown very fashionable among our great Pretenders to Wit and *Philosophy*; and I am very glad, that such Men are ashamed of the Name of *Atheists*, and hope, that a serious Consideration of the Folly and Unreasonableness of *Deism*; that is, to believe a God, and to deny all revealed Religion, may dispose them to an impartial Inquiry into the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Faith.

I. The Folly of *Deism*.

I will begin with this, to make Men consider a little what they intend by it, or what wise End it will serve. Every one sees, what Men intend by *Atheism*, to deliver themselves from the Fears of invisible Powers, that they may follow their own Inclinations, and do what they like best themselves, without any Awe of God, or Reproofs and Terrors of Conscience, or the dismal Apprehensions of unknown and endless Punishments in the next World: And this is the wisest Course Men can take, who resolve to be wicked, that they may sin with Ease and Pleasure, without the bitter Allays of Shame and Fear.

But

But now if a *Deist* really is what he pretends to be; that is, if he does really believe that there is a God, and that the Soul is immortal; and that good Men shall be rewarded, and bad Men punished in the next World; he believes a great deal too much to sin with Security, and a great deal too little to have any comfortable Hopes of a better Life. That this is certainly the most hopeless State that a Man can be in in this World, it has all the Restraints and Fears of Religion, but none of the Supports and Comforts of it: As to shew this briefly.

I. He who does heartily believe, that there is a God, who will punish Men for their Sins, not only in this World, but in the next, believes too much to sin with Security, though he believes nothing at all of Revelation. For if Nature, as they grant, teaches Men, that there is a holy and just Governor of the World, who observes what we do, and will punish Wickedness, natural Conscience also will accuse, and terrify, and condemn wicked Men. Thus St. Paul assures us it was with the Heathen World, before they had any Revelation of God's Will. *For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law: these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another,*

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ther, Rom. ii. 14, 15. And the same is attested by all the Heathen Orators, Philosophers, and Poets. And those natural Terrors of Conscience, and Fears of Vengeance, were in those Days, before Men had ever heard of the Gospel of our Saviour, so very unsupportable to bad Men, that they took Refuge in *Atheism* against them, as *Lucretius* does very honestly confess, and admires his Master *Epicurus*, for his brave and bold Attempt, in delivering the World from the Fears of God and of Religion.

So that whoever believe a God, and live wickedly, must fear on, whether they believe the Gospel or not, that *Deism* can do them no Service: And yet I am pretty confident, that the only thing which tempts so many Men to deny all revealed Religion, is the Fear of that terrible Vengeance which the Gospel of our Saviour denounces against all wicked Men; *Lakes of fire and brimstone, blackness of darkness; the fire prepared for the devil and his angels; the worm that never dieth, and the fire that never goeth out.* They are not willing to believe the Punishments of the Damned to be so terrible nor so certain as the Gospel represents them; and therefore prefer the Light of Nature, which gives a more uncertain Account of such Matters, before the Gospel Revelation. They can more easily bear, and more easily baffle the natural Fears, Misgivings, and Jealousies of a guilty Conscience, than such express Declarations

clarations of God's Wrath against Sinners. The Holiness and Justice of God make it very reasonable and probable, that God should punish Sinners. But the Goodness of God gives great Reason to hope too, that he will not be so severe as the Gospel threatens; much less, that he will make any of his Creatures, though Sinners, eternally miserable.

This is the true Mystery of *Deism*, when it signifies any more than concealed *Atheism*. No Man chooses *Deism*, as the more certain Way of Salvation; but that which makes them so fond of it, and so averse to believe any more than the Light of Nature teaches, is, that they are not so certain to be damned.

But this is a very vain Design.

I. For can there be greater Folly than to pretend to believe the Punishments of bad Men in the next World, and yet to reject the Gospel, for fear of being too certain of them? Would not a wise Man, in a Matter of such Consequence as this, be glad to know certainly what he must trust to, and to know the very worst of his Case?

The Meaning of this indeed is very plain, and a very wise Design it is; they like the uncertain Fears of Nature much better than the Certainty of the Gospel Revelation, because they are resolved to sin on, and to venture the Punishments of the other World, which they can the more safely and honourably do, the less certain they are.

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But is it either safe or honourable to venture future Miseries? Would not a wise Man in a Matter of such vast Consequence choose to be safe? And though we reject the plain and express Revelations of the Gospel, if it be still reasonable to fear, (as it must be, if Nature teaches, that God will punish Sinners) it cannot be safe to venture. Men who pretend to live by mere natural Reason, ought to look upon reasonable Fears as certain Rules to live by; for they have no other: And then they gain nothing by rejecting a more certain Revelation; for they must fear on; and if they act reasonably, must live as if their Fears were certain; and if they do not, though they reject Revelation, natural Conscience will make them fear and tremble too, whether they will or no. Though the Light of Nature does not give us such certain Evidence of future Punishments as the Gospel does, yet the natural Fears of a guilty Conscience will as certainly torment us, as if we did believe the Gospel: For a reasonable Fear has a certain Torment proportioned to the Object of our Fears. Men do not fear merely according to the Evidence they have for Things, but according to the Concernment of the Things they fear: And when eternal Miseries are the Objects of our Fear, a little Evidence will raise a terrible and furious Passion.

2. And

2. And though the Light of Nature does not so particularly acquaint us what the Punishments of the Damned are, nor how long they shall continue, as the Gospel does, yet this gives very little Relief to a *Deist*: Though he will not believe the Scripture Account of eternal Punishments; yet when his Fears are awakened, he can set no Bounds or Measures to them. The Fear of unknown Miseries paints the Fancy with as frightful Representations, as the Gospel makes; for when we know not particularly what to fear, we always fear the worst that can be. This gave occasion to those poetical Descriptions of *Styx* and *Acheron*, and the *Infernal Judges* and *Furies*, and those various Torments inflicted on Tyrants and other bad Men; and though they did not positively assert the Eternity of Punishments, yet they set no Bounds to them, but what the Principles of their Philosophy inferred, in the various Transmigrations of Souls, or periodical Revolutions, or the final Conflagration, which they thought their Gods themselves could not escape. The Light of Nature prescribes no Measures nor Limits to the Punishment of Sinners, and therefore a *Deist* can never prove, that they are not so great and so endless as the Gospel describes them; and if Reason cannot prove them to be less, guilty Fears will never make them less; especially since the Gospel is now published to the World, and those who will

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not believe it, yet know what it says ; and though they can bribe their Reason not to believe it, their Fears will be very apt to believe the worst.

And now I would desire these Men, who think themselves so safe, if they can laugh the Gospel and all revealed Religion out of the World, seriously to consider, what they intend, or what they gain by it. If they do sincerely believe, that there is a righteous God, who will judge the World, and punish wicked Men, they are as much obliged to live a holy and virtuous Life as a Christian is ; and if they do not, they are exposed to the same Rebukes, and Lashes of Conscience, and guilty Fears. That they have not so much Certainty of this by the Light of Nature, as the Gospel gives us, makes no Difference, if they fear it ; their Fears will be as great and outrageous, the Sting of Sin will be as sharp ; but their Strength to resist the flattering Temptations of the World will not be so great : The more certain our Faith is, the more easy and secure our Victory will be ; and to weaken our Evidence, is only to make ourselves an easier Prey. And if this be what they aim at, to sin more easily and securely at present, and by degrees to conquer their natural Fears, which they can more easily do, and so make *Deism* an easy Step to *Atheism*, I confess they are in a hopeful Way : But while they believe a God, and the Rewards and Punishments of the next Life,

Life, it will do them no Service to reject the Gospel ; they may weaken their Faith by it, but not cure, but increase their Fears.

Secondly, As a *Deist*, if he be true to the Principles he professes, the Belief of a God, and of the Rewards and Punishments of the next Life, gains nothing at all by rejecting the Gospel Revelation, so he loses all the Supports and Comforts of the Gospel. Excepting those terrible Threatnings, which the Gospel denounces against impenitent Sinners, every thing else in it is a true *Ευαγγέλιον*, glad Tidings of great Joy to Mankind : It gives us so many signal Tokens and Pledges of the divine Favour, and such express Promises of God's Care of good Men in this World, and of the glorious Rewards of the next, as mere Nature at most affords but very imperfect Conjectures of ; that the *Deist*, if he have any generous Hopes of Immortality left, should be glad to have some better Assurance of immortal Happiness than Nature gives, and can think it no Advantage, that the Punishments of the next Life are uncertain, when the Rewards of it are as uncertain too, if we will allow no other Evidence but the Light of Nature. But I shall confine myself at present but to one thing, which all Mankind are equally concerned in, and which we can never be assured of, but by Revelation, and that is, the certain Pardon and Forgiveness of Sin.

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If God be holy and just, a Sinner (as all Mankind are) must be punished, except he be pardoned; and therefore can have no good Hopes towards God, till he is assured of his Pardon.

Now the mere Light of Nature gives us no absolute Assurance of the Pardon of Sin, no, not so much as it does that God will punish *Sinners*; and therefore a *Deist*, who rejects the Gospel Revelation, cannot possibly be so certain that his Sins shall be pardoned, as that he shall be punished for them.

The Holiness and Justice of God makes him an irreconcilable Enemy to all Sin, and the only Refuge Sinners have, is in the Goodness of God; but Goodness does not so necessarily prove, that God will forgive Sin, as Justice does, that he will punish it. For Goodness in its own Nature must give place to Justice, that is, Goodness cannot pardon, while it is unjust to pardon; for an unjust Goodness is no divine Perfection.

So that the Goodness of God, how great soever we conceive it to be, (and we cannot conceive it greater than it is) does not necessarily prove, that God must or will pardon Sinners, but only that he will pardon Sinners when it is wise and just to do so; but who can tell, when God will think it wise and just to do so, without a Revelation? or who can tell, what it is, that makes it wise and just for a good God to forgive Sins? A
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good Man does not always think himself bound to forgive those personal Injuries and Affronts which are offered him, much less is a kind and merciful Prince, who is intrusted with the Administration of Justice, and the sacred Authority of Government, bound to forgive every Malefactor out of pure Good-nature, which would soon dissolve Government, and make Authority contemptible ; and if we consider God as the supreme Governor of the World, it will satisfy us, that to forgive Sins, is not the immediate Effect of Goodness, but must be tempered and accommodated to the Justice and Wisdom of Government, which we understand so little of, that we can never certainly learn from the mere Light of Nature, when and upon what Terms God will forgive Sin.

The general Hope and Expectation of Mankind is, that God will forgive all humble penitent Sinners, and yet I cannot find, that any Man ever thought, that mere Repentance was sufficient to obtain our Pardon ; for all Religions had some instituted Rites to appease their Gods, which seems to argue, that natural Sense they all had, that some Atonement and Expiation as well as Repentance, was necessary to pardon.

Nor can Reason prove the contrary. Repentance renders Men fit Objects of Mercy, when no other Reason hinders ; but the Reasons

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sions of Government may supersede the Inclinations to shew Mercy. How often does a merciful Prince hang a penitent Malefactor, without any Blemish to the Mercy of his Government? And if good Men and good Princes are not always bound to forgive Penitents, then Repentance itself alone cannot entitle us to Mercy.

So that we can have no Security of the Pardon of our Sins, but by the Gospel of Christ, wherein God has expressly promised the Remission of Sins to all true Penitents, in the Name and through the Merits and Mediation of Christ.

Good God! what a Consolation is this to Sinners! Who would be without the certain Hopes of Forgiveness for all the World! How terrible is it to believe that there is a just God, who will punish Sinners, without knowing or believing a Saviour! Did these Men duly consider Things, they would think *Deism* to be the most dangerous State in the World, which has no Covenant, no Promise, no Priest, no Sacrifice; which might be the Religion of the State of Innocence, but is no Religion for Sinners.

Secondly, Let us now consider the Unreasonableness of *Deism*, and how inconsistent it is with itself: For to deny all divine Revelation, does extremely weaken the Belief of a God; and to acknowledge the Being of a
God,

God, makes it highly reasonable to believe a Revelation.

First, That to deny all divine Revelation does extremely weaken the Belief of a God.

A *Deist*, indeed, has this visible World for the Proof of a God, as St. Paul argues; *The invisible things from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and godhead*, Rom. i. 20. And this I grant is a very good Argument, but loses very much of its Strength in the Mouth of a *Deist*. For though it be highly reasonable to think that the World was made by that supreme and sovereign Being whom we call God, yet had we no other Notice of the Being of a God, but from this visible Creation, had there never been any Commerce or Intercourse between God and Men, had he never since the making of the World, given any Signs or Tokens of his Power and Presence, it would have been a very strong Presumption that there is no God, notwithstanding all the Arguments from the Frame of this visible World, that there is one: For it seems as unreasonable to think that there should be a God in the World, and Mankind hear nothing of him, see no visible Marks of his Care and Providence, in Matters of the greatest Consequence (as the Worship and Glory of God, and the Salvation of Mens Souls certainly are) that they should receive no Notices of his
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his Will, what Homage he expects from them, and what he will accept; that there should be no Communication between reasonable Beings and the Supreme Mind; as it is to think, that the World could be made without a God. For what End did God make reasonable Creatures, but to make himself known to them, which is the highest happiness and Perfection of reasonable Beings? And can we then imagine, that when God had made the World, and made Man, he should withdraw himself into Silence and Obscurity, and take no farther Notice of Mankind, nor make any other Discoveries of himself to them, than what they can imperfectly spell out from the visible Creation?

And on the other hand, though we must not urge the Authority of Revelation to prove a God, which would be to beg the Question, yet the Being of a Revelation we may; for whatever proves a divine Revelation proves a God.

The wisest and acutest Philosophers among the Heathens thought this the best and most sensible Proof of a God.

*Balbus the Stoic**, having begun his Proof of the Being of a God from this visible Creation, and the universal Consent of Mankind in this Belief, he resolves the Firmness and Stability of this Persuasion into those visible Signs which their Gods oftentimes gave of

* Cicero de Natura Deorum.

their

their own Power and Presence; *Quod presentiam sæpe Divi suam declarant.* And the Argument is certainly a very good one, though the particular Instances he gives of it, may be vain and fictitious, and want sufficient Attestation to gain Belief: But had *Balbus*, instead of the Apparitions of *Castor* and *Pollux*, and their ridiculous Rites of Divination, seen the Miracles of *Moses* and of *Christ*, the familiar Conversation of God with *Abraham* and *Moses*, the terrible Appearance of Mount *Sinai*, when God delivered the Law in an audible Voice, and the infallible Accomplishment of Prophecies, that is, had his Proofs of a divine Power and Presence been as undeniable, as his reasoning from such divine Appearances to the Being of a God is unanswerable; all the Wit and Sophistry in the World could never have evaded this Argument; for it would be impossible to persuade Men there is no God, when they do little less than see him in such present and sensible Effects, as can have no other Cause but a God. However, thus much we learn from this Dispute, that according to the Sense of the wisest Men, such visible Effects of a divine Power and Presence are the most irresistible Argument for the Being of a God; that the wisest Men did believe, that if there is a God, he would give some undeniable Proofs of his own Being in the Acts of Government and Providence, as well as of Creation; and that if there

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there never had been any such sensible Appearances of such a divine Power and Presence, it would at least have rendered the Being of God very doubtful.

This should make all those who heartily believe a God, to think and speak more honourably of Revelation; for the Belief of a God and of Revelation will stand and fall together; that a *Deist*, who ridicules all Revelation, takes a very ill Course to persuade the World that he believes a God.

Secondly, The Unreasonableness of *Deism* will further appear, if we consider, that to acknowledge the Being of a God makes it highly reasonable to believe a Revelation. I do not say, that to believe a God obliges us to believe every pretended Revelation; for the Truth of any particular Revelation depends on those peculiar Marks of Divinity and Credibility which it bears on it: But whoever believes that there is a God, cannot think it incredible, that God should reveal himself and his Will to Mankind; nay, will see great Reason to believe, that he has done so as the State of the World, in the different Ages and Dispensations of it, did require, and would admit. For,

First, No Man, who believes that there is a God, can question, whether God can, if he so pleases, make a more perfect Manifestation of himself and his Will to Mankind, than he has done by the Works of Nature: For what cannot

not he do, who made the World, and is infinite in Wisdom and Power ? As to consider particularly some of those Ways, whereby God is supposed to reveal himself to Mankind.

God is a pure and infinite Mind, who cannot be seen by mortal Eyes ; and yet will any Man say, that God cannot by some visible Appearances convince Men of his immediate Presence beyond all Possibility of Doubt ? that he cannot either with or without such visible Appearances, speak to them, and talk as familiarly with them, as one Man converses with another ? And then, whatever Truth there be in the Story, which is another Inquiry, there is nothing in its own Nature incredible in those Relations we have of God's appearing to *Adam*, and conversing with him in Paradise ; of his appearing to *Abraham* and *Jacob*, who saw God face to face, *Gen. xxxiii. 30.* of his speaking to *Moses* face to face, as a Man talketh with his Friend, *Exod. xxxiii. 11.*

Cannot God, who formed our Minds, and knows all the Springs of Thoughts, draw such clear and bright Scenes and Pictures of Things on our Fancy and Imagination, whether sleeping or waking, as shall need no other Proof of their Divinity but themselves ? As Light is known by itself, and the first Principles and Maxims of Reason by their own Evidence.

Cannot

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Cannot the Son of God, who made the World, and made Man, if he so pleases, clothe himself with human Nature, and appear and converse in the World as a Man, and familiarly instruct Mankind in the Will of God and the Way to Heaven.

There is no Question then, but God can, if he pleases, inspire Men with the Knowledge of his Will, either by Dreams and Visions, or by an audible Voice, and a familiar Conversation, or by an immediate Impression upon the higher Faculties of Reason and Understanding; so that if there be a God, there may be Prophets inspired by God to reveal his Will to Men: And therefore the Pretences to Prophecy must not be laughed out of the World, but examined: The Thing is not incredible, because it is what God can do; but the Prophet must be tried, because there may be Cheats and Impostures.

Now the Trial of a Prophet, whether he come from God, is by such Works, as no Man can do except God be with him; that is, in short, by what we call Miracles, and foretelling things to come. And here again, he who believes that there is a God, cannot think either Miracles or a Prediction of future Events impossible: For what cannot that God do and know, whose Power and Knowledge are infinite? What cannot that God do, who made the World? Is it such a Difficulty to him, who framed our Bodies out of the Dust,

to

to give Health to the Sick, or Sight to the Blind, to make the Deaf to hear, and the Lame to walk, and to raise the Dead? We all know, this is above human Power; and therefore if such things be done, they must be done by the Power of God; and we know, that God can do them; and therefore Miracles are not impossible or incredible to him who believes a God.

Thus far the *Deist* must agree with me, unless he have a very mean Opinion of his God: For a God who cannot reveal his Will to Mankind, who cannot inspire Prophets, nor work Miracles, nor foretel Things to come, is no God, has not the Wisdom and the Power of a God. Now this is a great Point gained; for if God can do all this, then there is no Objection against the Nature of the Thing; and the only Dispute is about Matter of Fact, whether God have revealed his Will to Mankind? whether there ever were such inspired Men sent by God to instruct the World? whether there ever were any true Miracles wrought, or any certain Predictions of Things to come? And when Men are satisfied that such things may be, as they certainly may be, if there be a God, it will dispose them to a more modest and impartial Examination of such Matters, and not suffer them to despise revealed Religion at all Adventures: For in Matters, especially of such vast Moment, no wise Man will re-

ject and scorn what may be true, till he can prove it to be false.

2. Since then we must confess, that it is possible that God should reveal his Will to Mankind, let us consider, which is most probable, which is most agreeable to those Notions we have of God; that he should, or should not, make such a Revelation of his Will.

Now if we may judge of this by the general Sense of Mankind, there was not a Man in the World in former Ages, who believed a God, but did believe also some kind of Commerce and Communication between God and Men. This was the Foundation of all their religious Rites and Ceremonies, which every Nation pretended to receive from their Gods.

This gave Birth to all their superstitious Arts of Divination, that they believed their Gods had a perpetual Intercourse with Men, and by various means gave them notice of Things to come: And the *Stoic* in *Tully* thought, that the Acknowledgment of a God did as necessarily infer Divination, as Divination did prove the Being of a God. *Ego enim sic existimo, si sint ea genera divinandi vera, de quibus accepimus, quæq; colimus esse Deos: vicissimq; si Dii sint, esse qui divinent.*

Is it possible, as I observed before, to imagine, that God should make reasonable Creatures, who are made to know him, and to be happy in the Knowledge, and Love,

and Admiration of him, and withdraw himself from them, without giving them any visible Tokens of his Presence, or any other View of his Glory than in the weak and glimmering Reflections of his Works. Had Man preserved the Innocence and Purity of his Nature, (for whether we believe the History of *Moses* or not, if we believe, that God made Man, we must believe, that he made him holy) he had been fit for the Presence and Conversation of God, as Angels, and holy and pure Spirits are; and in this State there can be no doubt, but God would have shewn himself and his Glory to Man in some Measure and Proportion, as he does to the Angels in Heaven; as the History of *Moses* assures us, that God did to *Adam* in Paradise. So that Man was made, if I may so speak with Reverence, for the Conversation of God, which pious and devout Souls recover in some measure on Earth, and which we all hope perfectly to enjoy in Heaven.

Sin indeed, as necessarily it must, has made a greater Distance between God and Man; but if we must live in the other World, and be happy or miserable there (*as the Deist professes to believe*) if God still exercises any Care and Providence over Mankind, it seems absolutely necessary, that he should give some sensible Tokens of his own Being and Presence, and instruct them more perfectly in his own Nature and Will, than the Light of

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Nature teaches. For how much soever Men may magnify the Light of Nature, it is certain the State of the World was very ignorant and corrupt, and Mankind knew little of God, beyond a general Persuasion, that there was such a Being, and therefore worshipped a Multiplicity of Gods, and any thing for God, and that with such ridiculous and barbarous Rites, as were a Reproach to the Nature both of God and Man. And can any Man who believes a divine Providence, think that God takes no Care of his own Glory and Worship, nor of the Souls of Men? And it is certain he has taken none, if he have not revealed himself and his Will to the World.

Especially when we consider, that in those dark Times of Paganism, the Devil and evil Spirits had every where their Temples, and Altars, and Priests, and Sacrifices; frequently appeared to their Votaries in visible Shapes, and instituted their own Rites of Worship, and gave forth their Oracles and Responses, and by their various Arts of Divination, gave them notice of many Events. For though these were Cheats and Impostures, they were not all the Cheats of Priests, but of evil Spirits, who imposed both upon Priests and People, and by these Arts begot in them a great Opinion of their own Divinity, as we must confess, unless we will deny the Credit of all Histories. And when this, by the secret

cret and hidden Counfels of God, was the miserable and degenerate State of Mankind; can we think, that God fhould leave himfelf without any other Witnefs than the Light of Nature; fhould give no Demonftrations of a Power fuperior to all thefe vulgar Deities, nor give Men any certain Notices of his Will, no Rules of Converfation or Worfhip?

It is certain in Matter of Fact, that all the Reformation which has been made in Mens Faith, and Worfhip, and Manners, is owing to the *Jewifh* and Chriftian Religion: This put a ftop to their abfurd Idolatries, and reftored the Worfhip of the One Supreme God in the World; which is fo wonderful a Change, as could not have been wrought without fome vifible and irrefiftible Proofs of Divinity.

This is fufficient to fhew, how unreafonable it is in thofe Men who believe a God, to deny all Revelation. For it is certain, that God can reveal Himfelf and his Will to Mankind, if he pleafes; and that the Nature and Providence of God, and the State of the World, makes it highly reaſonable to think he has done it. The Deſign of all which is no more but this, to remove Mens Prejudices againſt the very Notion of a revealed Religion: For were this effectually done, they would ſoon diſcover the moſt unqueſtionable Characters of Divinity in the Goſpel of our Saviour. I am ſure, if we do believe a God, and

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It is certain in Matter of Fact, that all the Reformation which has been made in Mens Faith, and Worship, and Manners, is owing to the *Jewish* and Christian Religion: This put a stop to their absurd Idolatries, and restored the Worship of the One Supreme God in the World; which is so wonderful a Change, as could not have been wrought without some visible and irresistible Proofs of Divinity.

This is sufficient to shew, how unreasonable it is in those Men who believe a God, to deny all Revelation. For it is certain, that God can reveal Himself and his Will to Mankind, if he pleases; and that the Nature and Providence of God, and the State of the World, makes it highly reasonable to think he has done it. The Design of all which is no more but this, to remove Mens Prejudices against the very Notion of a revealed Religion: For were this effectually done, they would soon discover the most unquestionable Characters of Divinity in the Gospel of our Saviour. I am sure, if we do believe a God, and

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another World, nothing can be so desirable as a more explicit and perfect Account of the Will of God, and the Way to Heaven, than mere Nature can give us.

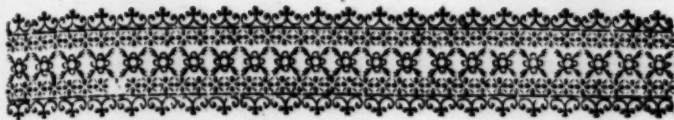
What Impression this may make upon professed *Deists* I cannot tell; they have so used themselves to laugh at every thing that is serious, and to confute the wisest Arguments with bold and profane Jest, that little Good can be expected from them: But I hope this may caution those, who are not yet infected, and make the Name of a *Deist* in a Christian Nation, as contemptible as the Name of an *Atheist*; they are both owing to the same Cause; they live much alike; they are equal Enemies to Christianity, and equally dangerous to any Government, where they themselves are not uppermost. It is a great Reproach to a Christian Nation, where such Doctrines are publicly owned and professed, and such Persons courted and flattered as the most refined philosophical Wits. I pray God this Nation do not find the mischievous Effects of it both in Church and State. Government can never be long secure without the sacred Authority of Religion; and destroy revealed Religion, and we shall quickly have none, as is too visible in the Lives of *Deists*. I am sure, it is a vain thing to talk of a Reformation of Manners, while such Men are suffered to poison the very Fountains, to undermine all Religion, and to root up the very Foundations
of

of Piety and Virtue. I do not love to prophesy ill Things ; but that Nation cannot reasonably expect to receive Good from God, which is so unconcerned for his Glory and Worship; it being the standing Rule of his Government, *He that honoureth me, I will honour; but these which despise me shall be lightly esteemed.*

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for evermore. Amen.



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S E R M O N XII.

Preached on *September 2, 1699.* being the Fast for the Fire of *London*, at the Cathedral Church of *St. Paul*, before the Right Honourable the Lord-Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of *London*.

MICAH vi. 9.

The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name. Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

WHEN the State of this World is happy and prosperous, it is no Wonder to see Men indulge themselves in Ease and Luxury, forget God, or grow careless and formal in Religion. For though it might reasonably be expected, that happy Creatures, who rejoice in
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the Blessings of Heaven, should be very devout Worshipers of that God from whose Bounty and Goodness they receive all ; yet human Nature, in this degenerate State, is very fond of sensual Pleasures : And when an easy and plentiful Fortune puts it into Mens Power to enjoy as much of this World as they will, there are but very few who can set Bounds to their Enjoyments, and taste the Pleasures of this Life, without taking large and intoxicating Draughts of it ; and this sensualizes Mens Minds ; and *a carnal mind is enmity against God ; faith unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.*

Never any People had more sensible Demonstrations of the Power and Presence of God amongst them, and his particular Care of them, than the *Israelites* had ; and yet *Moses* tells us in his prophetic Hymn, *Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked ; thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness ; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation, Deut. xxxii. 15.* And thus God complains, *Isai. i. 2, 3. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken ; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* And as much as we may despise and abhor the Ingratitude

gratitude of the *Jews*, this is the general State of Mankind; and we may find too many Examples of it in all Times and Nations.

But it seems much more unaccountable, *when the judgments of God are abroad in the world, that the inhabitants thereof should not learn righteousness*: Because Judgments are apt to awaken Men, and make them consider. When God speaks in Thunder and Lightning, those must be deaf indeed, who will not hear. This is the merciful Design of Providence in sending such terrible Judgments on the World, to make Men consider their Ways and their Doings, and to convince them that there is a God that judgeth in the Earth. For Judgments have a Voice, had we but Ears to hear: They proclaim the Power and the Majesty of God; a terrible Majesty, and irresistible Power; they scourge and they threaten Sinners, and call for Weeping, and Mourning, and Fasting: And how unthankful soever the *Jews* were to God for his great Mercies and Deliverances, yet they were not so insensible of his Judgments; *When he slew them, then they sought him, and returned and inquired early after God, and remembered that God was their rock; and the high God their redeemer*, Psalm lxxviii. 34, 35.

This we are exhorted to in my Text, *To hear the rod, and who hath appointed it*: To consider for what Reasons those Evils which
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we at any time suffer, are come upon us, and what God intends by the Rod ; which is the only way to grow better by our Afflictions, and to prevail with God in great Pity and Compassion to remove them.

But this is the great Difficulty : Who shall reveal this Secret to us ? How shall we distinguish between the Corrections of God, and the Wickedness of Men ? How shall we understand the Language of the Rod, and to whom it speaks ; for what Sins it strikes, and who are those *Achans* that are the Troublers of our *Israel* ; and what God expects from us in such Cases ?

I shall briefly explain these things to you, and apply it to the present Occasion.

But I must premise, that I only address myself now to those who believe a God and a Providence ; and that God hath revealed his Will and the Rule of his Providence in the holy Scriptures. As for Atheists and Infidels, who have neither Eyes nor Ears, they can only feel the Rod like Brutes, not hear its Voice like Men : Though *the Lord's voice crieth unto the city, it is only the men of wisdom that see his name.*

Now as for those who believe a God and the holy Scriptures, there are two very plain Interpreters of God's Judgments ; *natural conscience, and the word of God.* For the Judgments of God have not an articulate Voice to acquaint us in plain and express Words, upon

on what Errand they come ; but they are Signs which speak by an Interpreter ; and if we carefully attend to the Dictates of natural Conscience, and to the Word of God, we cannot mistake their Meaning.

I. As first : No Man who attends either to the Dictates of natural Conscience, or to the Word of God, can doubt *who it is that hath appointed the rod* : This is the first and most natural Question of all ; and yet a great many, who profess to believe a God and a Providence, seem not well satisfied in this Point : They allow that some Judgments are the Hand of God, but are not willing to grant this of all ; especially when they see what the immediate and visible Causes of such Sufferings are.

Some of the greatest Evils which either private Men or public Societies suffer, are manifestly owing to the Injustice and Wickedness of Men ; and they can no more believe that it is the Will and Appointment of God, that they should suffer such Evils, than that it is the Will of God that others should do them : And all such Rods as are not appointed by God, can teach us nothing but the Wickedness of those by whom we suffer ; for if God has not sent them, they can bring us no Message from God. And yet most Men are in some degree infected with this Disease : We suffer many Evils which we are not willing to ascribe to God, and then we learn

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learn nothing from them but a little worldly Policy and Prudence; to take better Care of ourselves and our Affairs, to be jealous and distrustful of Men; or, it may be, to watch our Opportunities to revenge the Injuries we suffer, and to return them with Interest: And yet we profess to believe a Providence; though it were as honourable to God to deny his Providence, as to deny his sovereign Disposal and Government of all Events; or rather, they are both an equal Reproach to him. For a Providence which does not take care of Creatures, is little worth; and we cannot say that God takes care of his Creatures, if any Evil befalls them without his Will and Appointment.

But natural Conscience sees the Hand of God in all the Evils we suffer: Whatever the visible and immediate Causes and Instruments of our sufferings are, a guilty Conscience takes notice of the divine Vengeance; the Terrors of God take hold upon him, and he trembles before his Judge, though he do not see him; he is afraid of God, when he feels only the Hands of Men. And what is the Meaning of this? What is the Language of these guilty Fears, but that whatever the Rod be that strikes, it is moved and directed by a divine Hand; that the Wickedness and Injustice, the Wrath and Fury of Men, is no other than the Vengeance of God? For why should the Evils we suffer from Men so ter-
rify

rify a guilty Conscience, had we not a natural Persuasion, that all these Evils are sent by God, whoever are the Instruments of them?

Thus it is natural in all such Cases to fly to God for Help. Atheists themselves cannot wholly prevent this ; but when they are surprised with any sudden Dangers, Nature is too quick and too powerful for their Philosophy, and surprises them into an Acknowledgment of God and a Providence, which they must do Penance for when their Fright is over. Sinners who forget God in Prosperity, fly to him in their Distress ; *remember that God is their rock, and the high God their redeemer.* And if this be a natural Acknowledgment of Providence, as it certainly is, it owns the Hand of God in our Sufferings, as well as his Power to save ; for both equally belong to the supreme and sovereign Lord of the World ; and it is not merely his Power to help, which makes Sinners fly to God in their Distress, but a Sense of his Anger in what they suffer : They do not fly to God as Men do to a powerful Patron, but as Criminals do to the Mercy of a provoked Father or Prince : When they fly to God, it is to implore his Mercy as humble Penitents, to appease his Anger, that he may remove his Judgments ; and when we fly to the Mercies of God to remove the Rod, it is an Acknowledgment that it is he that strikes, as well as he alone that can save.

And

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And that Conscience judges right in all this, however some Men may attribute it to a superstitious Education, is evident from Scripture, which expressly tells us, That God *doth whatsoever, pleaseth him, both in heaven and in earth.* That none can stay his hand, or resist his will, or say unto him, *What dost thou?* That there is no evil in the city, which the Lord hath not done. If Job be stript of all his large Possessions in a Day, it is *the Lord that gave, and the Lord that taketh away.* If the mighty King of *Assyria* invade *Israel*, and lay waste their Cities and Country, he is *the rod of God's anger, and the staff in his hand is his indignation,* *Isai. x. 5, 6.* *Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, but God is the judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another,* *Psalms lxxv. 7, 8.* This shews us, that whatever our Sufferings are, it is God that appoints the Rod, and then it must nearly concern us.

2dly, To hear the Rod, what and to whom it speaks. Now in this Case also, Conscience and the Word of God are the best Interpreters of God's Judgments. The Rod teacheth another way, but teacheth the same thing that Conscience and Scripture teach us; that is, it proclaims aloud the Evil of Sin, and God's Anger and Displeasure against it, and calls us to Repentance, and Reformation of our Lives.

When

When the Judgments of God are upon us, Conscience knows their Errand, and calls all our Sins to remembrance, and sets them in Order before us. Nothing but Guilt makes us afraid of God; and how quiet and secure soever Sinners are at other times, the Judgments of God will awaken their guilty Fears; and if Men will hearken to the Voice of an awakened Conscience, it will certainly tell them why God strikes; and we cannot take a safer Course, than to reform those Sins of which our Consciences then accuse us.

All the Threatnings of Scripture are against Sin, and all the Judgments there recorded, especially public and national Judgments, were inflicted for the Punishment of Sin; and these are to be our Examples, as they are the standing Rules and Measures of Providence. God never punisheth but for Sin, though he may exercise particular good Men with difficult Trials; and therefore when bad Men and a wicked Nation suffer, they may certainly know the Cause; they have sinned, and God is angry, and summons them to Repentance; *for this is the fruit of all, to take away sin.* The Voice of Judgments is the same with the Voice of Conscience, and the Voice of God's Prophets; *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge*

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the fatherless, plead for the widow, Isai i.
16, 17.

This is plain enough, and sufficiently known, if it were but sufficiently laid to Heart; and this is all that we are concerned to know of the Judgments of God. The secret and hidden Designs of Providence, which many times surprise the World with unexpected Events, are the Care of God, and belong not to us, till the Scene opens, and we see what Part is allotted us in it. Whatever God be a doing, we have nothing to do but to amend our Lives, which will remove the Scourge from us, and entitle us to the Care and Protection of Providence. Whereas to busy ourselves with politic or prophetic Guesses at unknown Events, to paint our Imaginations with black and frightful, or with gay and charming Scenes of Things, as desponding Fears, or sanguine Hopes inspire the Prophet, can do us no good, but may do a great deal of hurt to ourselves and the World. This is not the Voice of the Rod, which makes no new Revelations to us, but only awakens the Convictions of Conscience, and enforces the Reproofs and Threatnings of the Word, with such sensible and smarting Proofs of the Evil of Sin, and God's Anger against it, as will make all Men consider, who have not lost their Senses; and many times restore Sense and Understanding to those who had lost them.

But

But to this some Men will seem a very dull Account of God's Judgments, which will neither gratify their Curiosity, nor Ill-nature; nor, which they think worse, leave them any Excuse to palliate their Hypocrisy.

The Judgments of God declare God's Anger against Sin, and call us to Repentance: This Men will own, but do not like to hear it expressed in such general Terms, as if when God sends his Judgments amongst us, he were angry with us for all our Sins, and called us to repent of them all. This they think hard, that they must part with all their Sins, to remove these Judgments; nay, this they think can't be the Truth of the Case; because the World is always very wicked, and yet the Judgments of God are not always abroad in the World; and therefore they suppose, that when God does execute Judgments, it is not Sin in general, but some particular Sins, which so highly provoke him; and could they learn what they are, and reform them, they might see happy Days again: And this sets Men at liberty to favour what Sins they please, to reproach and accuse each other, and to charge all the Evils and Calamities they suffer upon one another, without thinking of reforming Themselves.

Thus to be sure it always is, when there are differing Parties and Factions in a Nation, who judge very differently of Good and Evil: They will all confess they are great Sinners,

and, it may be too, many of all Parties are guilty of the same Sins ; but those Sins which are common to them all, must pass for nothing, because so far they are all agreed. But then there are peculiar party Sins, which every Party dislikes in each other ; and what they dislike, they conclude God dislikes too ; and to these they attribute all the Evils they suffer : As if the Judgments of God were not to reform the World, but to decide some party Quarrels, which will never be decided this way, when every Party will expound Judgments in favour of themselves.

But all Men see that this is to judge by a false and partial Rule : This is neither Conscience nor Scripture ; for Conscience equally condemns all Sin, and so does the Scripture too. I grant, tho' there is always a great deal of Wickedness committed in the World, God does not always inflict public Judgments, which are commonly executed when Wickedness and Impiety is grown public too ; when public Government is remiss in punishing Wickedness, or the Numbers and Power of Sinners are grown too great for the Correction of public Justice : But we shall always find in Scripture, that when God did inflict public Judgments, he called for a general Repentance and Reformation ; and if this were not so, no Man could understand the Voice of the Rod without a Spirit of Prophecy. But this deserves a more particular

cular Consideration, both with respect to those Sins for which God most commonly sends his Judgments, when he sees fit to execute a public Vengeance; and the Necessity of an universal Reformation, when the Judgments of God are upon us.

1. The most general Account the Scripture gives us of public Judgments, is an universal Corruption of Manners. Thus the Prophet describes the State of the *Jewish Church*, when God threatned his Judgments against them: *Ab sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy One of Israel, they are gone away backward. And the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, nor bound up, nor mollified with ointment, Isai. i. 4, 5, 6.* And in Verse 10. he calls them, *The rulers of Sodom, and people of Gomorrah*. When Wickedness is grown universal, and hath infected all Ranks and Orders of Men, such a Nation is ripe for Judgment; but it adds greatly to the Guilt and Provocation, when Men are not contented to be wicked without bidding open Defiance to God and to all Religion. *Woe unto them who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with cart-ropes, Who deride all the Threatnings of God, and*

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even dare his Power and Justice : *That say, let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it ; and let the counsel of the holy One of Israel draw nigh, and come, that we may know it.* Who mock at the Differences of Good and Evil, and value the Reputation of their Wit and Philosophy too much to be cheated with such empty Names. *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil ; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness ; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.* *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.* Who having first destroyed the eternal and essential Differences of Good and Evil, change their Names too at pleasure, and think themselves the only wise Men in the World for doing so. This takes off all Restraints, and gives the Reins to their Lusts ; and they live, just as they believe, without making any Difference between Good and Evil. *Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink ; who justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.* *Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as the dust, because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the holy One of Israel, Isai. v. 18, &c.* The like Account we find in the other Prophets. And when the State of a Church and Nation is so
corrupt,

corrupt, we need not inquire for what particular Sins God strikes; but yet there were some Sins which God expressed a severer Indignation against, and seldom delayed to punish; such as their Idolatry, and Contempt of the God of *Israel*, of his Word and Prophets; a Profanation of his Worship; atheistical Notions of Providence, and of Good and Evil; or their abominable Hypocrisy, in committing all the Lewdness and Villanies which Men could commit, and sheltering themselves in an external Form and Appearance of Religion, which the Prophets every where complain of. To these Causes is owing the universal Corruption of Manners; for it is impossible any Nation should so universally degenerate, till they have either corrupted their Religion by Superstition and Hypocrisy, or lost all Sense of it; and therefore this calls for a speedy Vengeance.

As for what more particularly concerns the Christian Church, we may learn from the Epistles to the Seven Churches of *Asia*, what it is provokes our Lord either severely to punish us, or to remove the Gospel from us. The Church of *Ephesus*, though she had acquitted herself well in many things, yet *had left her first love*, had abated very much of her Zeal and Fervor for the Name and Religion of Christ. The Church of *Pergamus* is threatened for suffering those among her

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who taught idolatrous Worship, and fleshly Lusts; and the Church of *Thyatira* likewise for suffering the Woman *Jezabel* to commit Fornication, and to eat Things sacrificed to Idols. The Church of *Sardis* made a glorious and pompous Profession of Religion, but without the true Life and Spirit of it; *she had a name to live, but was dead*: And the Church of *Laodicea* grew very cold and indifferent, even in the Profession of Religion, as well as in the Practice of it; she was neither *hot nor cold, but lukewarm*. All these our Saviour summons to Repentance, and threatens to punish or destroy them if they did not, *Chap. ii, and iii. of the Revelations*.

The Application of all this to ourselves is so obvious, that I need not multiply Words about it: We are that very Nation wherein all these Evils meet; it is hard to name any Vice which is not openly committed amongst us without Fear or Shame; nay, Things are come to that Pass, that to be a modest Sinner, to boggle at any Wickedness, or to blush at it, is as great a Reproach as to be Virtuous: And though some Men are ashamed to own themselves Atheists, yet to believe in Christ, and to own any revealed Religion, or to talk seriously of Providence, of God's governing the World, and punishing Cities and Nations for their Wickedness, is thought a Jest; and I wish it were a Jest only among vile and mean People, of no Fortune and Education;

Education; whereas we often see that their Condition makes them modest, and untaught Nature teaches them better, till they are corrupted by the Examples of Men of Wit and Figure in the World. And as for those who pretend to Religion, it is a very melancholy Prospect, to observe how little of the true Life and Spirit of Christianity there is among them. There is indeed Noise, and Zeal, and Faction enough among some People, and that makes others as cold and indifferent: The Tempers of the Church of *Sardis* and *Laodicea*, the one that had a Name to live, but was dead, the other that was lukewarm, make much the greatest Parties among us; and the very best Men, I fear, are too much inclined to the State of *Ephesus*, which had *left her first love*, those great Passions and Ardors of Devotion which ought to inspire the Minds of Christians.

Let us then hear the Rod and tremble: See how God dealt with the *Jewish* Church for these Sins; see what our Lord hath done to the Churches of *Asia*; and though we cannot say what God will do to us, because we know not what wonderful Designs are in the Womb of Providence, yet we know what we do, and how God hath dealt with those who have done as we do; which is too just Reason to fear that he will deal so by us too, unless we repent and reform, which they did not. For,

2dly, When

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2dly, When the Judgments of God are upon us, the Reformation must be universal too : It concerns every Man to reform himself ; for a Nation can never be reformed, but by the Reformation of particular Men, who make up the Nation ; and therefore when we are summoned to Repentance, as the Judgments of God summon us all, every Man must examine himself what he has to repent of, and reform himself. But yet there is great Difference between a national and personal Repentance and Reformation, and they serve very different Ends.

A Nation may be said to be reformed, and God may in great Mercy remove his Judgments, though (what is never to be expected) every particular Man do not repent and reform himself : But then such a national Reformation requires the Execution of public Justice against public Wickedness, to make Sin publicly infamous, and to teach the greatest and most powerful Sinners Modesty : To banish, if not Sinners, yet Sin out of our Courts, and out of our Streets ; and to make it once more seek for Night and Darkness for a Covering ; that Virtue may no longer blush in Company, or need Apologies ; nor Vice dare to brave it at Noon-day.

There has indeed of late been some Care taken by public Laws and royal Proclamations, to punish the Profanation of God's Name

Name by accursed Oaths ; but yet in most Cases Men may be as vile as they please, and as publicly so as they please, and little or no Notice taken of them ; nay, they may talk and write what they please against God and Religion, ridicule the History of *Moses*, and the Gospel of our Saviour, and the Mysteries of the Christian Faith, and gain Credit and Reputation by it. I hope there are not many Christian Nations in the World, which in so public a manner permit these things. We have talked of Liberty of Conscience, and Reformation, to good purpose, if the only Effect of it be a Liberty of ridiculing the Christian Faith ; which might make one suspect that all the Zeal some Men have expressed against Popery, was at the bottom of it a Zeal for Atheism and Irreligion ; which the Discipline of Popery, as bad a Religion as it is, would not endure ; it is indeed well fitted to make Atheists and Infidels, but will make Men have a care how they profess it. And it is to be feared, that this Scepticism, and Infidelity, and Contempt of Religion will prove a Back-door to let in Popery again upon us.

But to leave these Thoughts with those whose proper Care and Business it is ; whether a Nation will be reformed or not, it concerns every particular Man to hear the Rod : The Judgments of God warn us of his Anger and Displeasure against Sin, that
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we may fly from the Wrath to come; and we do not hear the Voice of the Rod, nor improve Judgments to their true End, if we do not so repent and reform, as to save our Souls; and this to be sure must be a personal and an universal Reformation. And yet even with respect to present Judgments, a personal Repentance and Reformation is of great Use; for when the Judgment is public and national, God many times makes a remarkable Distinction between Persons: *Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with them, for they shall reap the fruit of their doings: Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given to him:* Which is spoke with respect to public Judgments, *Isai. iii, 10, 11.* Which is a sufficient Encouragement for particular Men to repent, and reform their Lives, whatever others do.

But it is time to apply what I have now discoursed, to the particular Occasion of this Day's Solemnity; though possibly some may think that this Application comes too late; it might have been very seasonable, one or two and thirty Years ago, while the Marks of this terrible Vengeance were fresh and visible; when the Ruins of our Houses and Churches could only tell us where *London* stood, and shew us its Funeral-pile, where its Glory lay in the Dust: When so many thousand Families felt the Smart of their
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ruined Fortunes, and were either forced to begin the World again, or sunk irrecoverably under it. This fiery Vengeance had a Voice then, and a very terrible Voice, enough to awaken the most stupid and lethargic Sinners. But when we see our City rebuilt more beautiful than ever, as the little poor Remains of the old one witness; when our Riches and Glory are increased beyond the Example of most former Ages; it seems too late to lament over the Ashes and Rubbish of our fired City, when there are no visible Remains of these Ruins to move our Pity or Sorrow: And indeed were this the only Design of this annual Fast, it were high time to put an end to it, or to turn it into a thanksgiving Festival; for it is in vain to expect, that after three and thirty Years, the Return of this Day should revive and renew our Sorrows and Lamentations, when our Ruins are renewed, our Losses repaired, and those frightful Impressions which the Sight of that devouring Fire made on us, forgot; and little left to put us in mind that our City was burnt, but the Inscription upon the *Monument*, and the Sight of a new City, with the several Dates of its Resurrection; which must needs qualify all melancholy and sorrowful Reflections on what is so long past.

But though the Design of this Solemnity is not to represent and act over again a new
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doleful Scene of Horror, Confusion, and Amazement, which neither Nature nor Art can imitate, as we saw it once on this Day, without such another amazing Sight, which God grant we may never see again till the general Conflagration; yet it is of great Use to keep up a lively Sense of such Judgments upon our Minds, which become the Subject of Reason, of cool Thoughts, and wise Considerations, when the Terror and Frightfulness of them is over.

Judgments could never make a lasting Reformation in the World, were we concerned to remember them no longer than we feel their Smart; but they are intended both for Punishment and Instruction; the Punishment ends with the Smart, and that puts an end to all whining and tragical Complaints; but this alone is the Discipline of Fools or Brutes: The Instruction is for Men, and this is to last as long as Memory, and Thought, and Reason last. What could the Fire of *London* teach us thirty three Years ago, which it does not teach a wise Man still? And what Thoughts and devout Passions became us then, which are not still on this Day the proper Exercise of our Devotion?

When we saw our Churches and Houses in Flames, when we saw those furious Torrents of Fire rolling down our Streets, and despising all the Opposition that human Art

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or Strength could make, as if they had known by what a divine and irresistible Commission they acted; there were few Men to be found, who did not express a great Fear and Reverence of the Power, and Justice, and terrible Majesty of God, who did not see and own the Hand of God, and the visible Tokens of his Displeasure, and begin in good earnest to think of reforming their Lives, and making their Peace with God, who had now taken the Rod into his own Hand.

When we saw our Riches make to themselves Wings and fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven; when we saw all our Pride and Glory, the Toil and Labour of our whole Lives, the Food, and the Instruments of our Lusts, vanish into Smoke and Dust; this effectually taught us the Uncertainty of all present Things, and made us seriously consider what an ill State those were in, who had nothing to trust to but such vanishing Treasures; and how reasonable our Saviour's Command is, *Not to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven,* which are not subject to such Casualties; which will make us bear such Losses better when they come, and secure our eternal Interest.

When

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When Men saw their Riches and Treasures vanish in a Cloud, it naturally made them consider much of this they owed to the Poor, how much they daily spent upon their Lusts, and how much they had unjustly got; that is, how much of what God had taken from them was not their own, and how much they had abused the Gifts of God: Very wise and pious Thoughts, had they lasted; and yet too plain to be missed by those who thought at all, when they saw these Lessons written in bright Characters of Fire.

Now was all this, do you think, calculated only for *Sixty-six*? Is not God the same still? a just and righteous Judge, who is *angry with the wicked every day*, though he do not every Day *bend his bow*, and *let fly his arrows*; though he do not every Day *make the earth tremble and quake*, and *the very foundations of the hills to shake*, because he is *angry*; though we do not every Day see *a smoke go out of his presence*, and *a consuming fire out of his mouth*; though he do not upon every Provocation appear in his terrible Majesty, *riding upon the cherubins*, and *flying upon the wings of the wind*. Methinks one such Example might serve us for some Ages, without expecting or desiring to be summoned again to Repentance by new Terrors. *God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness*: He delights more to display his Glory in Acts of Goodness and Bounty to his Creatures; but

but Judgments are his *strange work*, which makes the signal Execution of them so very rare; and the Way to have them rare, is not to forget them, to learn Righteousness by the Things which we have suffered; to fear and tremble before that God who is so *terrible in his doings towards the children of men*.

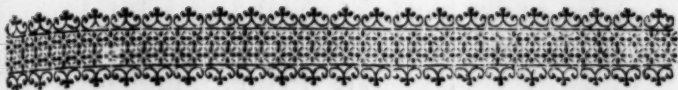
But if the Fire of *London* was too long since to work upon our Fears at this Distance, (though I confess I wonder how any Man who saw that Sight, should ever forget it, or remember it without a just Awe and Reverence of God;) but, I say, if these Impressions of Fear and Terror are lost, let the Beauty and Glory of our New City, our increasing Riches, our flourishing Trade, our Ease and Plenty, teach us to love and reverence, and worship and praise, that God, who *in the midst of judgment hath remembered mercy*; who hath *plucked us as a firebrand out of the fire*, and hath not suffered our Enemies to triumph over us, *who said, down with it, down with it, even to the ground*. This is the way to perpetuate our Prosperity and Glory, if the Remembrance of past Judgments teaches us to fear God, the Sense of his present Mercies to love him, and both to obey him.

Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ : To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and ever. Amen.

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S E R M O N XIII.

The DIVINE PRESENCE in Religious Assemblies.

Preached at the Cathedral Church of
St. Paul, the First *Sunday* after
Opening the Choir, Dec. 5, 1697.

PSALM xcvi. 9.

*O worship the Lord in the beauty of
holiness.*

VE have lately made our first so-
lemn Appearance before God in
this House with all the external
Solemnities of Worship, and, I
hope, with those Transports and Ardours of
Devotion, which such great Occasions re-
quire : Excepting those Christian Feasts,
which *contain* the Mysteries of our Re-
demption by Jesus Christ, two more joy-
ful Solemnities could not well have met in
one Day ; the One a Feast of Dedication, the
Other of Peace. Blessed Union ! May these

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Two be never parted: May the Church enjoy Rest and Ease under the gracious Influences of a victorious Prince; and may the Throne be established in Peace by its Love and Zeal for God's House.

The public Solemnities of Worship, and the public Peace of Church and State, are the most comprehensive Blessings which we can enjoy in this World: They are an inferior Accomplishment of the angelic Hymn at the Birth of our Saviour: *Glory be to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men.*

These are the Matter of our present Joy, which ought not to be confined to one short Day, but to be had in perpetual Remembrance, as we hope and pray, that these Blessings may be perpetual.

But my present Design relates to God's House, and that Worship, which we must pay to God there. *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*

I. And first I shall begin with the *beauty of holiness*; the right understanding of which may possibly turn some Mens Curiosity into Devotion. There is, I think, no Dispute, but that by the *beauty of holiness*, the Psalmist means the Tabernacle or Sanctuary; for if *David* was the Penman of this Psalm, the Temple at *Jerusalem* was not then built, and thus it is applied in this Psalm, *ver. 6. Ho-*
nour

power and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary: And ver. 7. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, bring an offering, and come into his courts; which is immediately explained in the Words of my Text, O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; and thus the Seventy render it both here, and in Psalm xxix. 2. 'E ἁλὼν ὡς ἡ ἀντὶς, in his holy Tabernacle: This was the peculiar Place of Worship under the Law, which is called the beauty of holiness, from that excellent and incommunicable Majesty which dwelt there.

There is such frequent Mention made in the Old Testament of God's peculiar Presence in some Places above others, of the House of God, where he dwells, where he places his Name, where he sits between the Cherubims, and such a peculiar Sanctity and Holiness for this Reason attributed to these Places, that no Man denies the Distinction and Holiness of Places under the *Jewish* Dispensation: But there are too many, who think that the Gospel of Christ has put an end to all such Distinction of Places, as it has done to all other *Jewish* Ceremonies; that God has no other Church now, but the Assemblies of Christians, and the Hearts of devout Worshipers, in what Place soever they meet; that to think God is more present, or more acceptably worshiped in one Place than in another, is either *Pagan* or *Jewish* Superstition; that to behave our-

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selves with greater Reverence in a Christian Church, than we do in our own private Houses, unless it be in the immediate Acts of Worship, is no better than to worship Wood, and Bricks, and Stone, as if they had some peculiar Sanctity in them.

This, as slight a Matter as some may think it, is of mischievous Consequence to Religion, as it delivers Mens Minds from those awful Regards to the divine Presence, which 'ought to possess them when they approach God's House; as is too often seen in a careless and irreverent Worship: And therefore I shall take this Occasion briefly to represent this Matter, which when truly stated, will admit of little Dispute.

To assert in loose and general Terms the Holiness of Places, and that religious Regard and Reverence, which is to be paid to them, may, I confess, give just Offence to Christian Ears; as if the Place and House itself had such a Holiness, that we must not only worship God in such a Place, but that we must pay some religious Reverence to the House itself with relation to God. For if once we admit of any kind of relative Worship, I know not where we can stop, but may as well worship Pictures, and Images, and Crucifixes, as holy Places, upon account of their relation to God and Christ. But yet no understanding Christian will deny, that we must worship God with all Humi-
lity

lity of Soul and Body, where-ever we know that God is peculiarly present to receive our Worship; that if there be any such Places, where God is thus peculiarly present, we must approach his Presence, and behave ourselves while we continue there, with all religious Reverence and Devotion. It is the peculiar Presence of God, which is the only Holiness of any Place, and which alone challenges our religious Adorations. And the Reasonableness and Necessity of this, every one must own, who acknowledges the peculiar Presence of God in the appropriated Places of Worship: For if God be peculiarly present there to receive our Worship, whenever we approach his Presence, we ought to approach him with all the external Signs of Reverence; which is not to reverence the Place, but to reverence that excellent Majesty, which is peculiarly present in that Place.

So that rightly to understand this Matter, I must briefly explain the Scripture Notion of God's peculiar Presence in the Places of Worship, and what Reverence such a Presence requires from us, when we approach such Places.

First then I observe, that though it be the constant Doctrine of Scripture, that God is essentially present in all Places, yet there are some Places which are peculiarly called his Presence; and thus it has been ever since the Creation; where-ever God manifested

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himself peculiarly present, such Places were called *his Presence*, and became the ordinary standing Places of Worship.

It does not seem improbable to me, that though all Paradise might be called *the presence of God*, yet there was some peculiar Place, even in Paradise itself, where God did most ordinarily appear to our first Parents: For we read in *Genesis* iii. 8. that when *Adam* and *Eve* had eaten the forbidden Fruit, *they heard the voice of the Lord God*; that is, the eternal Word, *walking in the garden in the cool of the evening, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden*. Which seems to intimate, that there was some particular Place in Paradise where God used to meet with them, from which they fled, and by so doing, thought to hide themselves from the Presence of God.

In the Story of *Cain* and *Abel*, this seems more plain; there was at that time some peculiar Place, whither they brought their Offerings to God, and therefore where God was supposed peculiarly present to receive their Offerings, *Gen.* iv. 3, 4. and in *ver.* 14. *Cain* complains, *Behold thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid*; that is, from thy Presence; as it is expounded *ver.* 16. *Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod*. Where it is plain,

plain, the Presence of the Lord signifies a certain Place, where God was so present, as he was not in other Places; for we can never go out of the essential Presence of God, as the Psalmist witnesses, *Psal. cxxxix. 6, 7, 8, 9. Whither shall I go then from thy spirit, or whither shall I go from thy presence: If I climb up into heaven thou art there; if I go down into hell thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right-hand shall hold me;* and therefore in this Sense the Land of *Nod* was as much God's Presence, as where *Abel* and *Cain* dwelt before; but *Cain* went out from the Presence of God into the Land of *Nod*; that is from that Place, where God dwelt, and conversed with them, into a Land where he never vouchsafed such a peculiar Presence.

In the History of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, we not only learn, that in those Days, they always had their peculiar and appropriate Places of Worship, but that they pitched their Tents, and built their Altars, either in such Places, as God directed them to, or where God appeared to them, and those were the Places, where God ordinarily conversed with them.

Thus the Lord *appeared unto Abraham in the place of Sichem in the plain of Moreh, and there he built an Altar unto the Lord, who appeared*

appeared unto him, Gen. xii. 6, 7. Hither he returned again when he came out of *Ægypt*, unto the Place of the Altar which he had made there at first, and there he called on the Name of the Lord, Gen. xiii. 4. So that the Appearance of God to him in this Place, had made it a standing Place of Worship; and here God appeared to him again, and renewed his Promise to him, after the Departure of *Lot*.

After this, by God's Command, *Abraham* removed his Tent, and dwelt in the Plain of *Mamre*, and there he built an Altar to the Lord, Gen. xiii. 18. and here God frequently appeared to *Abraham*, as we may see in Chapters xv. xvii, xviii. Thus when God appeared to *Isaac* at *Beersheba*, he built an Altar, and called upon the Name of the Lord, and pitched his Tent, and took up his Abode there, as in a Place where God was present, Gen. xxvi. 24, 25.

Thus as *Jacob* was going towards *Haran*, being forced to lodge all Night in the Field, in his Dream he saw a Ladder set upon the Earth, and the Top reached to Heaven, and the Angels of God ascended and descended on it, and God himself stood above it, and renewed his Promise and Covenant with *Jacob*: From hence *Jacob* concluded, that God was peculiarly present in this Place, *How dreadful is this place, this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven*; and therefore he

he calls the Place *Bethel*, and set up the Stone for a Pillar, whereon he lay, and poured Oil on it, and vowed, that if he came again in Peace to his Father's House, that Stone, which he had set up, should be God's House, *Gen. xxviii.* And accordingly, when he was returned from *Padan-aram*, God himself commanded him to go up to *Bethel* and dwell there, and to make there an Altar to God, who appeared to him, when he fled from the Face of his Brother *Esau*, *Gen. xxxv. 1.*

After the Days of the Patriarchs, the next Instance of this Nature, is that of *Moses*, to whom God appeared in a burning Bush, and said, *Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*; that is, consecrated by the Presence of God, whom we must approach with all external Reverence; which pulling off the Shoes was an Expression of in those Eastern Countries, *Exod. iii. 1, &c.* and a like Example we have in *Joshua*, chap. v. 13, 14, 15.

And this is a true Account of the Holiness even of the *Jewish* Tabernacle and Temple: There were indeed great Mysteries concealed under Types and Figures, but these Types were not the Holiness of the Place, but God's peculiar Presence there. When *Moses* had set up the Tabernacle, *a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle*, *Exod. xl.*

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xl. 34. Thus, at the Dedication of Solomon's Temple, *when the priests were come out of the holy place, the cloud filled this house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord,* 1 Kings viii. 10, 11. This was a visible Sign, that God had taken possession of this House, and would dwell there, as Solomon expounds it, Verses 12, 13. *Then spake Solomon, The Lord said he would dwell in the thick darknes. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.* For this Reason it is called the House of God, his Habitation, his Dwelling-place, his Gate, his Courts, and (which is the true Interpretation of all this) his Presence. *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,* Psal. xcv. 2. that is, to his House and Temple, where God is present, which is therefore called *appearing before the Lord*, as all the Tribes of Israel were commanded to do three times every Year, at the three solemn Festivals; and this appearing before the Lord, was their coming up to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple.

This I hope sufficiently proves, that both before and under the Law, God, who is essentially present in all Places, was yet so peculiarly present in some Places, as he was not in others.

Secondly,

Secondly, But for the better understanding this, we must inquire, what this special and peculiar Presence of God is. For this seems a great Difficulty to some Men, that God, who is present every where, should not be equally present in all Places : But the Account of this I think is plain and short, that though God is present every where, he is not equally present in all Places to all Purposes, which is the only possible Distinction that can be made concerning the Presence of an omnipresent Being. God is present in Heaven, in Earth, and in Hell ; but he manifests himself very differently in each ; and these different Manifestations are a different kind of Presence.

As to keep to my present Subject : God is present in all the Earth, as the Supreme Lord, Governor, and Preserver of all Things ; but in some Places he was peculiarly present to reveal his Will to Men, and to receive their Homage and Adorations : And this is that, which is peculiarly called the *Presence* of God in Scripture, as is evident from all the Instances which I have already given.

But is not God present in all Places to hear the Prayers of good Men, who call upon him ? Yes, most certainly ; and so he was both before and under the Law ; and yet we see that he sanctified some Places with his more peculiar Presence for the public and solemn Acts of Worship. A Prince may receive

ceive a private Petition from a private Hand, wherever he is present, but yet may think it very fitting to appoint a Presence of State to receive the public Homage and Addresses of his Subjects : Thus, in Fact, it was in the *Jewish* Temple, and was as reasonable as the public Solemnities of Worship are, without which, Religion itself would be banished the World. For did Men once believe, that they could worship God as well at Home as at Church, that God is no more present in religious Assemblies, than in their private Closets, there were an End of public Worship, and of Religion with it. This is too visible in those, who have entertained this Opinion, they either quite desert the public Worship, and grow careless and unconcerned for Religion ; or if they do sometimes come to Church, it is to comply with popular Custom and Opinion, or only to gratify an itching Ear ; and, *Athenian* like, to hear some new Thing. But when God, who has his Throne in Heaven, has his Footstool and Presence on Earth, where he commands us to pay our Homage : This preserves the Sense of God and of Religion alive in the World, and gives a just Awe and Reverence for God, when we approach his Presence.

This is a very sensible Reason for appropriated places of Worship, where God vouchsafes his more peculiar Presence : If this were not originally a divine Institution, as the Instances

stances I have already given fairly intimate it was, then mere natural Reason taught it all Mankind; for there never was any Nation, which worshiped any God, but they erected Temples for their Worship: The Poverty and persecuted State of the Christian Church for the three first Centuries, have made some think that they had no Churches, or appropriated Places of Worship; but a learned Man * of our own has proved beyond all Contradiction, that this is a Mistake; and the Zeal of Christians in building magnificent Churches in the Reign of *Constantine*, the first Christian Emperor, shews plainly what their Sense was of this Matter.

And it is as evident, that all Nations, did believe, that the Gods they worshiped, were peculiarly present in their Temples. The Pagans did not believe their Gods to be Omnipresent, and therefore endeavoured by magical Spells and Charms, to shut them up in their Images and Temples, that they might know where to find them; and in this Notion, the ancient Christians abominated the Thoughts of Temples and Images, since they worshiped a God, who fills Heaven and Earth with Presence; this indeed was a Corruption of natural Religion, as Polytheism and Idolatry was, but shews, how necessary they thought a Divine Presence to a place of Worship.

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* Mr. Mede.

The *Jews* understood better, that God could not be confined to any Place, *that the heaven and heaven of heavens could not contain him*, as *Solomon* owns in his Prayer of Dedication, but yet begs, that God would be graciously pleased to be present to hear and answer the Prayers and Supplications, which should be made to him in that House; which is all the peculiar Presence he prays for, which is necessary to make a House of Prayer, the Name God himself gives to the *Jewish* Temple; *My house shall be called a house of prayer.*

Now if this be the proper Notion of God's House, that it is a House of Prayer, a House where God is peculiarly present to hear our Prayers, we must own that every Christian Church is as much the House of God as the Temple at *Jerusalem* was, unless we will deny, that God is as present in Christian Assemblies, and in Places dedicated to Christian Worship, as he was in the *Jewish* Temple; which is to make Christianity a more imperfect Dispensation than *Judaism*; for that is certainly the most perfect State of the Church, where God is most peculiarly present.

There is indeed a great Difference between the *Jewish* Temple and Christian Churches, but as to the Presence of God, which only makes a Temple, the Advantage is greatly on the Christian Side.

The Ark of the Covenant, the Tabernacle and Temple, contained many Types and Figures

Figures of Christ; but these Types were not the Presence of God, nor the Object of their religious Worship, which had been Idolatry against the second Commandment; but for the sake of these Types, God chose that Place for his peculiar Presence: Now instead of these Types, we have the Antitype itself, the Son of God made Flesh, who though ascended into Heaven, has promised his peculiar Presence in all the Assemblies of Christians; which is such a Presence of God, as never filled the *Jewish* Temple, till Christ appeared; for which Reason God tells them, that the second Temple, though it fell vastly short of the external Beauty and Magnificence of the first, yet should excel in Glory, by the personal Appearance of Christ in it, *Haggai* ii. 3, 7. *Malach.* iii. 1. So that Christ having promised, that *wherever two or three are gathered together in his Name, he will be in the midst of them*, every Christian Church has a Divine Presence greater than the Temple. For though we should grant, that this Promise extends to all the occasional Meetings of Christians, whatever the Place be, yet it much more extends to all the solemn and public Places and Acts of Worship.

Thus there was but one Temple in the whole Land of *Canaan*; God for mystical Reasons, confining his more peculiar Presence to that House, where he had placed the

Types and Figures of Christ, through whom only we have Access to God ; but now this blessed Jesus, who is greater than the Temple, is in all Christian Assemblies, and makes every Christian Church greater than the Temple : In this Sense our Saviour told the Woman of *Samaria*, *Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father*, John iv. 21. which does not signify, that hereafter there should be no peculiar and appropriate Places of Worship, but that the Presence and Worship of God, should no longer be confined to any one Place, neither to the Temple of *Jerusalem*, nor *Samaria* ; but it should be free all the World over, to erect Houses of Prayer and Worship, where God would be as present with them, as in the Temple of *Jerusalem* ; for there should be an end now put to that typical State and typical Worship, which was confined to the Temple, and *the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth* ; and this spiritual Worship is confined to no one Place, but will find God present all the World over ; which is so far from abrogating all peculiar Places of Worship, such as the Temple at *Jerusalem* and *Samaria* were, that it makes every Church, whatever Part of the World it be in, in a truer Sense the House of God, than ever the Temple at *Jerusalem* was.

And there is one Thing more of great Consequence, which we learn from this, that
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we now want no new Appearance of God to consecrate a Place for his Worship, as it was in the Days of the Patriarchs, nor any new Command to appoint us where to build a House for God, as it was under the Law : Our Saviour has consecrated every Part of the World, where Christians live, to be such holy Ground as is fit to receive a Temple and House of God ; and his Promise to be in the midst of the Assemblies of Christians, gives us as great an Assurance of a Divine Presence in such Places, as if, like the Tabernacle and Temple, we saw them again filled with a Cloud and a visible Glory.

II. Having thus shewn you, that God, who fills all Places, is yet peculiarly present in some Places ; and what this peculiar Presence is, that God is present as the Object of our Worship, to hear our Prayers, and to receive our Praises and Thanksgivings, our Alms and Oblations, let us now consider the Exhortation of my Text, which is the natural Improvement of this, *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*

I. And here first I observe, that the very external Beauty and Ornament of God's House, is one Part of Homage, which we owe to him. The Riches and visible Glory of *Solomon's Temple*, was one of the Wonders of the World ; a divine Art and Nature conspired to build an House, as fit as Art and

Nature could make it, to signify the incommunicable Majesty and Glory of that God who dwelt there. And this Nature taught all Mankind; the Magnificence of their Temples did not only shew their Devotion, but what their Art, and what their Riches were. And the primitive Christians, when they enjoyed Peace and Plenty under Christian Emperors, were so far from thinking this a piece of *Pagan* or *Jewish* Superstition, that their first Care was to erect beautiful and stately Churches, to rival and out-do all the external Glory of *Pagan* Temples; and it was always accounted a great Instance of the Piety of Princes to encourage and promote such Works.

But you'll say, what is all this to God? Can we think, that he, who has made the World with such inimitable Art and Beauty, can be pleased with any House we can build for him, whatever Art or Riches we bestow on it? But this very Objection answers itself: For God has made this beautiful World for his Temple, and has chose the most glorious Part of it for his Throne; which shews, that though he be an infinite pure Spirit, he does not despise an external Glory; for thus he must represent his invisible Greatness and Majesty to his Creatures. And therefore when he thinks fit to vouchsafe his Presence with us on Earth, we must provide the most honourable Reception for him that we can; and when we have done all
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that Art and Nature can do, we have so far expressed our Devotion and Reverence for the Divine Presence.

This Objection lay against the Temple at *Jerusalem*, as well as against Christian Churches; and yet *David* thought it very indecent, and a want of a just Reverence for God, that he himself should dwell in a House of *Cedar*, and the Ark of God dwell within Curtains, 2 *Sam.* vii. 2. which should be considered by those Men, who think all that is bestowed upon beautifying and adorning God's House a vain and superfluous Expence, when they think no Cost too great to adorn their own.

2. The House of God too must be used as God's House; that is, must be separated from common Uses, and appropriated to the Worship of God. It must not be a Place of Trade and Commerce, and ordinary Conversation, as we learn from our Saviour's Zeal, in driving those who sold Oxen, and Sheep, and Doves, and the Changers of Money out of the Temple; which he did at two several times; the first immediately upon his Entrance on his Ministry, *John* ii. 13, 14, 15, 16. the second immediately before his Crucifixion, *Matt.* xxi. 12, 13.

Some learned Men observe, that the Place of this Merchandise in the Temple, was the Court of the *Gentiles*; and from hence conclude, that our Saviour's Zeal was not confined

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fin'd to the *Jewish* Temple, but concern'd all Christian Churches, to which the Court of the *Gentiles* bore a greater Analogy; but whatever Force there may be in this, I think the Reasons our Saviour gives, do much better explain his Meaning: *Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise*, John ii. 16. And it is written, *My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves*. Matt. xxi. 13. Which Reasons have no relation to the typical State of the *Jewish* Temple, but equally concern all Places, which are the House of God, and the House of Prayer; that is, where God vouchsafes his peculiar Presence to hear our Prayers.

And indeed, when Christ express'd so much Zeal for the House of God, when the typical Glory of the *Jewish* Temple was at an end, having received its Accomplishment in his own Person, it is a very good Reason to believe, that he intended this as a standing Rule for the religious Use of all Christian Churches and Oratories: I am sure the Reason is universal and unanswerable, that the House of God, which is a House of Prayer, ought not to be profan'd by any common Uses.

3. Let us worship *in the beauty of holiness*; that is, let us resort to the House of God, to the House of Prayer, there to offer up our Prayers and Thanksgivings to him. For if God have a House, where he
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has promised his peculiar Presence to hear our Prayers, that is the proper and peculiar Place of Worship. The Scripture makes it a very material Circumstance of Worship to approach God's House, to enter into his Courts, to come into his Presence, to own ourselves his Servants and Worshipers; and without disparaging private Prayers, or Closet and Family Devotions, there is no reason to think God will own those for his Worshipers, who deny him this public Homage.

There is no doubt, but God knows our Prayers, where-ever we make them, for he knows our very Thoughts; but to hear Prayers, signifies a gracious and favourable Acceptance; and this no Man can promise himself, who will not pray, where God has promised to hear.

All the Promises of the Gospel are originally made to the Christian Church, the Body of Christ, and to particular Christians, as Members of, and in Communion with the Christian Church. But those cannot pretend to be in Communion with the Church, who never communicate with it; who, though they form no Schism, yet withdraw themselves from its public Assemblies, and will either be no Christians (which I fear is too often the Case) or will be Christians by themselves. Now if they know of any Promises, made to them in this single Capacity, let them take the Comfort of it; for

my part I know of none. Those who live in Communion with the Church, and serve God in his House, as oft as Leisure and Opportunity will permit, may expect a gracious Return to their private Prayers, which are offered to God in the Name of Christ, and in the Communion of the Church; but this is no Encouragement to those, who set up private Devotions against public Worship,

4. Let us worship the Lord in the *beauty of holiness*; that is, when we approach the House of God, let us take care to worship him: This is the proper Work of the Place; we have no other Business here; and it is a Profaneness not to do it. There is no Reverence due to the House, as I observed before, but there is to that God who dwells in it. When *Moses* and *Joshua* were commanded to put off their Shoes, because the Ground was holy, it was not to worship the Ground, but that God who was present there. And for the same Reason, if we believe the Presence of God in Christian Churches, it will not only justify, but require all the visible Signs of a religious Reverence, that to uncover the Head, and bow the Body may escape the Censure of Superstition or Idolatry.

And while we are in the House and Presence of God, especially in Time of Worship, we must carefully abstain from all irreverent Behaviour, Laughing, Whispering, Talking,

Talking, or any such Indecencies, as unbecoming the Presence of a Prince, or any Superiours, much more the Presence of God.

And yet this is too familiar a Practice, and that among some, who if they have no Sense of, or Reverence for the Divine Presence themselves, yet in good Manners and common Prudence, ought not to affront Christian Assemblies, nor set such a scandalous Example to others. What *St. Paul* said to the *Corinthians* concerning their irreverent Behaviour at the Lord's Supper, is very applicable to these Men: Have ye not Houses to converse, and talk, and laugh in, or despise ye the Church and Presence of God?

And when we approach the House of God, let us heartily join in all the Parts of Worship, with Attention of Mind, and fervent Passions. This becomes the Place, and the Presence we are in. We come to worship God; and not to worship him is a Contempt, and a Contempt put upon him in his own Presence.

And truly I know not how to excuse those from this Contempt, who turn their Backs upon any Part of the Christian Worship. You may easily guess what I mean: Is Communicating at the Lord's Table any Part of the Christian Worship? Nay, is it not the principal Part of it? How comes it to pass then, that when our Churches are crouded at Prayers or Sermons, the Table of the Lord

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is deserted? Certainly if Christ be ever present with us, it is in this mysterious Supper: Why then do we fly from the Presence of our Lord? Why do we approach his House, and refuse to eat and drink at his Table, though he offers us the dearest Pledges of his Love, his Flesh to eat, and his Blood to drink?

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be honour, glory and power, now and for ever. Amen.

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S E R M O N X I V .

Preached at *St. Paul's Cathedral*, *November 22, 1699.*
Being the Anniversary Meeting of the Lovers of Music.

P S A L M lxxxⁱ. 1, 2.

*Sing aloud unto God our strength, make
a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
Take a psalm, and bring hither the
timbrel, the pleasant harp, with the
psaltery.*



O praise God is acknowledged by
all Men to be the most excellent
Part of divine Worship; it is the
Religion of happy Creatures, and
the natural Homage due to infinite Goodness
which is the most glorious Perfection of the
Deity. It exercises the best Passions of our
Souls

Souls in the most perfect Manner, *Love, Joy, Reverence, Admiration*, which are the proper Passions of Devotion, made for God, who is their last Object; and made for the Praise of God, which is their most perfect Exercise. We cannot well conceive, what other Acts of Religion can be proper for Heaven; when we shall be advanced to the utmost Perfection of our Natures; when we shall have put off Mortality and Corruption, and all other Wants with them; when a complete and consummate Happiness shall leave no more Place for Desire; when we shall have nothing more to ask of God, nothing more to expect, but the secure Possession and Enjoyment of those Pleasures which fill but never satiate; which are eternally repeated, and are eternally new and fresh; I say in such a State as this, as Faith will be turned into Sight, and Hope into Enjoyment; so Prayer also, which is so great a Part of the Worship of Sinners, and indigent Creatures, will be all turned into Thanksgiving and Praise. Now as for this reason St. *Paul* prefers Charity before Faith and Hope; because, though they are admirable Graces for the State of Christians in this World, and absolutely necessary to carry us to Heaven; yet they cannot enter into Heaven themselves, where Charity attains its greatest Glory and Perfection; so by the same Reason it appears, that Praise and Thanksgiving is the most excellent Part of Worship, because this

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is the Religion of Heaven, and therefore ought to be the chief Delight and Entertainment of those who hope to go to Heaven.

But what is it to praise God? Is it only *to sing aloud, and to make a joyful noise to God?* Does it consist merely in the harmonious Melody of Voices, and musical Instruments? Does he praise God best, who composes the best Anthems, or sings them best? Or do we think, that we then praise God best, when we feel ourselves the most transported and ravished with excellent Music, performed by the best Voices, the choicest Instruments, and the greatest Masters? This is a very easy and a pleasant Way of praising God, if this would carry us to Heaven; but this is only to praise the Music, the Composition, or the Performance, when we think of nothing else, come for no other End, and mean no more by it. I would not have you mistake me; I do not appear in this Place at this Time to decry or disparage the Use of Music in the Worship of God, which would neither become this Presence; nor my own Character; but to persuade and direct you to turn the Delights and Charms of Music, into the Raptures of Devotion, which would the most effectually silence all the Enemies of Church-Music, and Cathedral-Worship, while as a divine Poet of our own sings, *This would visibly turn Delight into a Sacrifice.*

Now

Now since Music, whatever it be, and how well soever performed, is of no Use or Value in Religion, but as it serves the true Ends of Devotion; we must inquire,

- I. What that Harmony and Melody is, which is so acceptable to God.
- II. How fit external and sensible Melody is to promote this; and
- III. How it may and ought to be improved to that Purpose.

I. As for the first, I need not tell any Man, who understands the Nature of Christian Worship, that it is only the Melody of the Heart, as *St. Paul* speaks, that pleaseth God; All true Christian Worship, whatever the Externals of it are, is the Worship of the Mind and Spirit. This alone is that Worship which it becomes a reasonable Creature to pay to his Maker, his sovereign Lord and Saviour, as the blessed Virgin sang, *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.* For it is the Mind only that can praise God, though the Tongue must sing his Praises. The best composed Hymns, the most musical Instruments, the most charming Voices, are but lifeless mechanical Sounds, till they are animated and inspired by the Devotion of the Heart; and God takes no more Pleasure in the best Voices, than in bodily Strength or Beauty. Now the Melody of the Heart, is
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the Consent and Harmony of all the Powers and Passions of our Souls in the Praises of God. When Love, and Joy, and Admiration, and the profoundest Reverence bear their several Parts, and offer up our whole Souls as a living, vocal Hymn of Praise: Then we sing aloud in our Hearts to God, when we feel the greatest Transports and Extasies of these divine Passions, which swallow us up in God, and unite us to the heavenly Choir: Then we sing with true Melody in our Hearts to God, when these divine Passions, which are essential to Praise and Thanksgiving, charm all our earthly Passions into a Calm; quiet all their Storms and Tumults; leave no jarring Discords, no Discontents, no solicitous Cares, no Jealousies, no Envyings, to discompose the Harmony of our Souls, which must be all Peace, all Love, all Joy, to sing with a true divine Melody the Praises of God. This, and nothing else, is the true Praise of God, when our Minds are filled with such bright Ideas of his Glory and Perfections, with such a lively Sense of his Majesty, Wisdom, Goodness, Power, discovered in his great and wonderful Works of Creation, Providence, and the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ, as transport us with Love, Admiration, and Joy. A Heart thus full of God, will break forth into Songs of Praise; *when the fire is kindled within*, as the Psalmist observes

serves from his own Experience, *we shall then speak with our Tongues*: Here our Praises ought to begin, to be sure here they must always end, in the Heat and Fervour of our Affections, and an inward Feeling of the divine Praises, if we would have them an acceptable Worship of God. As far as the Harmony of Voices, or musical Instruments serve this End, they are excellent Helps to Devotion; but it is only their Subserviency to the Devotion of the Mind, which gives them any Value, or allows them any Place in religious Worship.

II. Let us then consider of what Use Music is to excite and quicken our Affections, and to give a new Life and Spirit to Devotion. Man is not all Soul and Spirit, but a compound Creature, consisting of Soul and Body; and while our Souls are vitally united to Bodies, they receive most of their Passions from them; at least feel the most strong and vigorous Motions from those Impressions which our Senses make; and Sight itself does not more variously affect our Minds than Hearing does; Words and Sounds have very powerful Charms, and give as quick a Turn to our Thoughts and Passions, as Sight itself, and not only Words but even a diversity of Sounds, are fitted by Nature to express, and to excite very different Passions. Love, Joy, Admiration, Desire, Fear Sorrow, Indignation, Revenge, give some distinguishing

guishing Notes and Accents to the very Voice, which no Art, but Nature teaches, and which betrays the Passion without speaking a Word; and such different Notes will also as forcibly imprint such Passions on our Minds, as they naturally represent, and that many times whether we will or no; which is a great Secret in Nature, and shews an unaccountable Sympathy between Sounds and Passions; which are by turns the natural Effects and Causes of each other: And there needs no other Proof what the natural Power of Music must be, to raise and to calm our Passions; and the Experience of all Mankind tells us, that thus it is; when the Composer knows how to fit Notes to Passions; which the Knowledge of human Nature, not the mere Proportion of Sounds must teach him. Without this a fine Piece of Music is like a Company of fine Words put together, without any great Sense or Meaning; they make a fine Sound, and that is all.

Now if there be a natural Sympathy and mutual Causality between Sounds and Passions, there is no doubt, but true devotional Music will excite or heighten our devotional Passions, as we daily see and complain, that wanton and amorous Airs are apt to kindle wanton Fires; for Nature will act like itself, whether you apply it to good or to bad Purposes. If there be no Force in Music to give a good or bad Tincture to the Mind,

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why do any Men complain of wanton Songs? They may than blame the Poet, but neither the Composer nor Singer; for the Music, it seems, does no hurt: If there be, why do they condemn Church Music, which will have as good an Influence upon a devout Mind, as the other has a bad one?

Why then should any Man think Music improper for the Worship of God? It is a natural Power, though improved by Art, as most other natural Powers are; and all natural Powers are made for the Worship and Service of God, as far as they are capable of serving him; which Music is in a very high Degree, if it have such a natural Power over our Passions, as to increase and actuate, though it cannot create Devotion.

Both Poetry and Music were originally used to celebrate the Praises of God; lost their Glory, when they descended to meaner Subjects, but were profaned by a Prostitution to Mens Lusts and Vices. The first Account we have of Singing, is the Song of *Moses*, *Exod. xv.* when God had made the Children of *Israel* to pass through the Red Sea on dry Ground, and had drowned the *Ægyptians*; and we cannot have a more ancient Account than this, which is the most ancient History in the World. And throughout the Old Testament, both Vocal and Instrumental Music, was not only used in the Worship of God; but this was the chief, if not the only Use

Use of it. This is acknowledged by all; but some will not allow it to be a Pattern for Christian Worship. They reckon Music among the Ceremonies of the *Jewish* Law, fitted to the carnal State of that People, and abrogated with the other legal Ceremonies, by the more perfect Dispensation of the Gospel, which requires a more spiritual Worship. But a few Words will shew, how unreasonable this Pretence is.

The Song of *Moses* and *Miriam* was before the giving of the Law, and therefore no Part of it; and though this is the first time we read of Singing, there is no Reason to think, that this was the first beginning of it. We read of no Institution of Singing, though we do of Singers; that Singing seems as ancient and natural, as public Worship.

But suppose Singing had been part of the Mosaical Law; the Gospel of our Saviour abrogates nothing of that Law, but such Types as receive their Accomplishment in Christ, or such appendant Ceremonies as were mere Signs and Figures of an Evangelical Righteousness: But what is Singing a Type of any more than Speaking? For it is only a more harmonious and emphatical way of Speaking; and I see no Reason, why Men may not reject Vocal Prayer, as well as Vocal Music, because they were both used by the *Jews*. Whatever Objections are now made against Church Music, which I have not now Time particularly to examine,

were as good Objections in *David's* Time, as they are now; and yet then Prophets composed Hymns, and Prophets set the Tunes; for so the chief Musicians, to whom *David* directs his Psalms, as the Titles of some of them express, were Prophets as well as Musicians; and methinks Men should speak more favourably of such Practices as were under the Direction and Government of inspired Men.

In the Vision of the Prophet *Isaiab*, ch. vi. 1. 2. 3. The Seraphims are represented crying one to another, *holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, heaven and earth are full of his glory*. This is acknowledged to be a great Example of antiphonal Singing, in which one answers another. But then they say, this plainly refers to the ancient Temple Worship, and must not be admitted a Precedent for Christian Practice. But if the Temple Worship be a fit Precedent for the Worship of Angels, why may it not be a Precedent for the Worship of Christians? Whose Worship as pure and spiritual as it is, falls vastly short of Angelical Worship. But do not the Angels then thus worship God in Heaven? This would be a new Objection against our Liturgy, never thought of before, which in the *Te Deum* teaches us to Sing, *To Thee all Angels cry aloud, the Heavens and all the Powers therein*.

To Thee Cherubin and Seraphin continually do cry.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabbaoth,
Heaven

Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory,

And if the Angels thus sing in Heaven, surely the Precedent is not unworthy of the Christian Church on Earth.

The like Representation we meet with of the four Beasts, and twenty four Elders, *Rev. iv.* And the same Answer is given to it, *That the Images in the apocalyptic Visions are fetched from the Law, and not from the Gospel.* But whensoever these Images were originally taken, this Book was directed to the Christian Churches, and therefore was a Rule and Precedent for them. It all along describes the State of the *Christian*, not of the *Jewish* Church, and therefore their Worship too: And if we look into the fifth Chapter, we shall find these four Beasts, and twenty four Elders were Christians, who were redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb, and sung the Song of the Lamb; *Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign upon earth,* ver. 9, x. This I take to be a Christian Hymn, and therefore a Pattern for Christian Worship.

And as much as some smile at the Conceit, I cannot but think, that the general Exhortations in the New Testament, to sing to God, *To admonish one another in psalms, and hymns,*

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To Thee Cherubin and Seraphin continually do cry.

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabbath,
Heaven*

Heaven and Earth are full of the Majesty of thy Glory,

And if the Angels thus sing in Heaven, surely the Precedent is not unworthy of the Christian Church on Earth.

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and spiritual songs; singing, and making melody in our hearts to the Lord; though they are not an apostolical Institution of a Choir, nor do prescribe the particular Forms of Cathedral Worship; yet they justify it all, as far as it is fitted to the true Ends of Devotion; for the Apostles knew after what manner they sung in the *Jewish* Church; and had this been so unfit, as is pretended for Christian Worship, they would not have exhorted Christians to sing, without giving them a Caution against *Jewish* Singing.

And now it does not seem to me much to the Purpose, to inquire whether this Practice was for any time intermitted in the Christian Church; and when, and upon what Occasion it was restored; for if what I have now discoursed hold good, it justifies the Use of Music in Religious Worship, whenever it can be had; though there may be some Times and Circumstances, which will not allow it. Though it could be certainly proved, that this was disused for the first three Centuries in the Christian Church, while they were under a State of Persecution: This would be no greater Argument to me against Cathedral Worship, than it is against Cathedral Churches: The Poverty and afflicted State of the Church at that Time would allow neither; but Prosperity by Degrees restored to them both. We may as well argue against the Use of Music in the *Jewish* Church, be-
cause

cause under the *Babylonish* Captivity they hung their Harps upon the Willows, and refused to sing the Songs of *Sion* in a strange Land, to those who carried them away Captives. The Primitive Christians in those Days never declared their Dislike of this way of Worship, but their Condition would not bear it. No Christian will deny, that singing the Praises of God and their Saviour, was always a principal Part of Christian Worship, and therefore was the Worship of the Primitive Christians, unless they were defective in a principal Part of Worship; so that the only Dispute can be about the Manner of Singing; and the chief Thing objected, is the *Antiphonal way of Singing*; which is acknowledged to have been used in the *Jewish Church*, and therefore has the same Authority that Singing has: But yet I will yield the Cause, if any Man can give me a good Reason, why it should be very lawful, and an excellent part of Religion, for an hundred Men, suppose, to sing a whole Psalm together; but very unlawful, and a Corruption of Religion, to sing it alternately; Fifty to sing one Verse, and Fifty the next; when by their answering each other, they mutually excite each others Devotion, and signify the Consent and Union of their Prayers and Praises in the Whole.

But setting aside the afflicted State of the Christian Church, the professed Enemies of

Cathedral Worship, allow us as great and early Authorities as we desire. St. *Basil*, St. *Ambrose*, and St. *Chrysostom*, always will be venerable Names. The Church was restored to Peace but in the fourth Century, and then this Worship revived, and that by the Authority and Example of as great and good Men as any the Church had.

That *Erasmus* himself, and many Reformers, were great Enemies to this way of Worship, as it was then practised in the Church of *Rome*, is no great Wonder, when their Hymns, as well as their Prayers, being performed in an unknown Tongue, all their Singing was mere Noise, which could contribute nothing to Devotion. But this is no greater Argument against our *English* Hymns and Anthems, than against our *English* Prayers. If they meant any thing more we must demand their Reasons: For as for Authority, our own Reformers and Reformation have, and that deservedly, a much greater Authority in the World.

III. But I must hasten to a Conclusion: Which brings me to the Third Thing I proposed, how Music may, and ought to be improved to the Purposes of Devotion: And here I must beg leave to speak something briefly to to three sorts of Men; *Composers*, *Singers*, and *Hearers*; which will serve for the Application of the Whole.

First,

First, As for Composers, those who set our Hymns and Anthems to Musical Notes. I do not pretend to Skill in Music, much less to be able to teach such great Masters as this Age hath bred; but I hope in some measure I do, and may be allowed to understand and teach Devotion, which is all I intend in this; for that which according to all the Rules of Art must be allowed for excellent Music, may not always be proper for Devotion.

It is a great Mistake in composing Hymns and Anthems, to consider only what Notes are musical, and will delight and entertain the Hearers: The true Rule is, what Notes are most proper to excite or quicken such Passions of Devotion, as the Words of the Hymn or Anthem express. This indeed cannot be done without Skill in Music, but true Devotion is the best Director of that Skill; for a devout Mind will judge of the Devotion, as a skilful Ear does of the Music of Sounds: That the most certain way for the greatest Masters to compose such Hymns and Anthems as are fit for the Worship of God, and may best serve the Devotions of Christians, is to work their own Minds first into all those Heights and Flames of Devotion, which they are to express in Sounds: which they will find a double Advantage in; it will make them good Christians, and admirable Composers of Church Music.

A devout Ear without any great Skill in Music, soon finds the want of this.

A grave, serious Mind, which is the true Temper of Devotion, is disturbed by light and airy Compositions, which disperse the Thoughts, and give a gay and frisking Motion to the Spirits, and call the Mind off from the Praises of God, to attend merely to the agreeable Variety of Sounds, which is all that can be expected from such Sounds as have nothing of Devotion in them: Which is so much the worse still, when, (as is now grown very common in such Compositions) they are clogged with needless and endless Repetitions. A Repetition serves only to give an Emphasis, and it requires a great Judgment to place it right; and is very absurd when it is placed wrong: But we often see, that there is too little Regard had to this: The Skill of altering Notes is the whole Design, which, when there is not very great Occasion for it, is like School-Boys varying Phrases, or like ringing the Changes; which how entertaining soever it be, when we have nothing to do but to attend to Sounds, is yet very nauseous and offensive to devout Minds in Religious Worship. I thank God, the ordinary Service of our Church is very grave and solemn, and well fitted to Devotion: And as for more modern Compositions, the Governors of Churches ought to take care to receive nothing into the Worship of God, but what is fitted to serve Devotion; and this would effectually answer the greatest Objections against Church Music.

Secondly,

Secondly, As for those who are employed in singing the Church Service and Anthems, to assist the Devotions of the Congregation, it certainly becomes them to behave themselves very devoutly in it. Musical Instruments, which have no Life and Sense, may minister to our Devotions, though they are capable of none themselves; but it gives great Offence and Scandal, to see those who are daily employed in singing Praises to God, to shew no Signs of Devotion in themselves, much more by an irreverent Behaviour to betray great Symptoms of want of Devotion. I thank God we have no great Reason to make this Complaint in this Church, and I hope, shall every Day have less; but this is a good Occasion to mind all such Persons, how devout they ought to be, (if Music be a Help to Devotion) who have this Advantage from Art and Nature, first to excite their own Devotions, and then to assist the Devotions of others; which last must be a very tasteless uneasy Employment, if they have no Devotion of their own: And a great Reproach also to their Art, when they themselves are Witnesses, how little Devotion it teaches.

But there is one Thing, which I believe is not so well considered, which yet is just Matter of Scandal; for those who sing divine Hymns and Anthems at Church, and whose Profession it is to do so, to sing wanton and amorous

rous, lewd, atheistical Songs out of it. Men, who have entered themselves into the Service of the Church, have consecrated their Voices to God; not so, as never to sing any thing else but Hymns and Anthems, but yet so as never to sing any thing to the Reproach of God, Religion, or Virtue. This unbecomes any Man, who calls himself a Christian, much more those whose peculiar Employment it is to sing the Praises of God.

Thirdly, As for Hearers, they ought also to consider, that their Business at Church, is not merely to be entertained with Music, but to exercise their Devotions, which is the true End of Church Music; to praise God with the more fervent Passions. It is a Contempt of Religion, and of the House of God, to come only to please our Ears, to hear better Voices, and more curious Compositions, more artful Singing than we can meet with in other Places.

This I have Reason to fear is the Case of very many who resort hither; who, especially on the Lord's-Day, croud into the Church to hear the Anthem, when that is over, to the great Disturbance of the Worship of God, and the Scandal of all good Christians, croud as fast out again. Though there is this Good in it, that they make room for devouter People, who immediately fill up their Places, to attend the Instructions of God's Word. But I hope this will not be charged

charged upon the Service of our Church, than Men who have no Devotion, come only for Music : For Church Music cannot create Devotion, tho' it may improve it where it is.

But indeed we ought all to be aware that the Music. does not employ our Thoughts more than our Devotions ; which it can never do, if, as common Sense teaches us it ought to be, our Minds be in the first Place fixed and intent upon the Praises of God, which are expressed in the Hymn or Anthem ; which, when conveyed unto us in Musical Sounds, will give Life and Quickness to our Devotions ; not first fixed on the Music, which most probably will leave the Devotion of the Anthem behind it. Those who find that Music does not assist but stifle their Devotion, and many such there may be, had much better keep to their Parish Churches, and prefer Devotion before Music. For to come to Church without any Intention to worship God in his own House, or to pretend to worship him without Devotion, are great Affronts to the divine Majesty.

In a Word : Those who profess themselves *Lovers of Music*, ought to consider, what the true End of Music is, and to improve it to the noblest Purposes. The mere Harmony of Sounds is a very pleasant and innocent Entertainment : Of all the Delights of Sense, this is in itself the least sensual, when it is not abused to recommend Vice, and to convey impure Images to our Minds : But yet merely

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ly to be delighted with charming and musical Airs, does not answer the true Character of a *Lover of Music*: For it is the least thing in Music to please the Ear; its proper, natural Use, and the great Advantage and Pleasure of it, relates to our Passions: To compose, to soften, to inflame them; and the diviner Passions it inspires us with, the more it is to be admired and valued, and then Music must attain its greatest Glory and Perfection in true Devotion: That *the Lovers of Music* ought to be very devout Men, if they love Music for that which is most valuable in it, and its last and noblest End.

To conclude :

It concerns the Lovers of Music to vindicate it from all profane Abuses; not to suffer so divine a Thing to be prostituted to Mens Lusts: To discountenance all lewd, profane, atheistical Songs, how admirable soever the Composition be: To preserve Music in its Virgin Modesty, and without confining her always to the Temple, make the Praises of God her chief Employment, as it is her greatest Glory.

Thus have I spoke my Mind very freely; shewed you the Use and the Abuses of Music, which was one great Inducement to me to comply with the Desires of those honourable and worthy Persons, who imposed this Office on me, that I might have an Opportunity of saying that which I thought fit should be said at one time or other, and for saying of which

which, there could not be a more proper Occasion than this.

And I hope this may plead my Excuse with all good Christians, if it have drawn my Sermon out to too great a Length, and given too long an Interruption to the Entertainment of those, the least Part of whose Business it was to hear a Sermon.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and ever. Amen.



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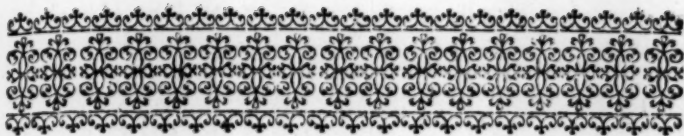
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S E R M O N XV.

Preached before the QUEEN,
at *Whitehall*, in *Lent*.

2 Tim. iii. 1, 2.

*This know also, that in the last days
perilous times shall come : for men
shall be lovers of their own selves.*

IS *Self-love* then so dangerous a thing, as to make the Times perilous ? What Times then can be prosperous and happy ? What Age produces such Monsters as do not love themselves ? And where is the Man that would be contented to live in such an Age ?

The Apostle then, by the *Lovers of their own selves*, cannot mean all those who are acted by this natural Principle of *Self-love*, to take care of their own Happiness ; for that

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is all Mankind, in all Ages of the World, and cannot be the Character only of the *last days*, nor the Cause of *perilous times*.

Self-love is the very Life and Spirit of the reasonable World, which has no other Spring of Motion : It unites Men into Societies, is the Parent of all Arts and Sciences ; it makes us take care of ourselves, and it teaches us to do good to others : It is no Virtue itself, because it is not Matter of our Choice, but as necessary as our Being ; but it is the Seed and Principle of all moral Virtues, as it obliges us to make ourselves happy, to preserve our Health, to increase our Fortunes, to gain the Good-will and good Opinion of our Neighbours, to be easy to ourselves, and to make the World easy to us ; which requires the Practice of all healthful, thriving, and sociable Virtues.

It is *Self-love* which inspires us with that divine Principle of universal Goodness and Charity, to do to other Men, what we desire they should do to us : It is this which makes us soft and tender to all the Impressions of Kindness, which makes us feel other Mens Sufferings, and other Mens Resentments in our own ; which makes us relish the Sweetness and Pleasure of doing Good, by the Pleasure of receiving it, and gives us an Antipathy and Abhorrence of doing Injuries, from our natural Aversion to suffer them.

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It is this *Self-love* which makes Mankind governable, and secures the Peace and good Order of human Societies. Human Laws would signify very little without Rewards and Punishments, and Rewards and Punishments would signify as little as Laws without *Self-love* : For could Men be unconcerned for themselves ; did they neither hope nor fear any thing, they could be governed only as Beasts are, by external Force. It is the Love of ourselves, which makes us delight in human Conversation, and promote the public Good, wherein all Mens private Fortunes are involved.

In a Word : This *Self-love* is the Principle of all Religion, which teaches us to love and worship God, who is eternal and essential Love and Goodness ; to praise him for our Being, for our Preservation, for all the Enjoyments of this Life, and for the great Hopes and Expectations of the next : It teaches us to reverence his Laws, to fear his Justice and Power, to depend on his Providence, to pray for the Supply of our Wants, and for the Pardon of our Sins : It gives Virtue and Efficacy to Faith and Hope, which are the great Gospel Principles of Obedience : For what would the Belief and Expectation of unseen Glories signify, if Men were not concerned to make themselves eternally happy ? So wild and extravagant is that enthusiastic Conceit of serving God without respect to

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the Recompence of Reward ; which contradicts the whole Scope of the Gospel, all the Motives, and all the Principles of evangelical Obedience, the Examples of all good Men, and of Christ himself, *who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of God.*

This is sufficient to prove, that St. Paul did not intend to condemn all *Self-love*, which when it acts regularly is the natural Principle of all moral and religious Actions ; and having prevented this Objection, which lay in my way, for the further Explication and Improvement of these Words, I shall do these three Things.

- I. Inquire what that *Self-love* is, which the Apostle here condemns.
- II. How dangerous and perilous such Times must needs be, wherein this *Self-love* prevails.
- III. Shew the Folly and Unreasonableness, as well as Wickedness and Impiety of it.

I. What that *Self-love* is which the Apostle condemns. For can *Self-love* be the fruitful Parent of all Piety and Virtue, and the Cause of all the Evil and Wickedness which is committed in the World ? Can the same Fountain send forth sweet Water and

and bitter ? and yet thus we see it is, both good and bad Men act from a Principle of *Self-love*, and bad design their own Happiness and Satisfaction. This inspires good Men with great and generous Designs, sets them above this World, makes them devout Worshipers of God, and very just and charitable to Men : And it is the same Principle which acts in bad Men, and drives them into all the Excesses of Wickedness ; they gratify their own Inclinations and Appetites by it ; they find present Ease and Pleasure ; they do what they love, they please themselves ; they pursue what they call Happiness, which is *Self-love* still, though turned off of its natural Bias by mistaken Notions of Happiness.

All Men love themselves ; but *Self-love* does not act alike in all Men, because they are not all agreed what Self to love : For Man consists of Soul and Body, of Spirit and Flesh, which have different Interests, Appetites, and Inclinations, and have distinct Pleasures and Satisfaction of their own. A good Man loves his whole Self, Soul and Body too, and designs and endeavours the Happiness of both, which is the intire Happiness of a Man ; and this is a virtuous *Self-love*, which makes the Flesh subordinate to the Spirit, governs our sensual Appetites by Reason, improves our Minds in Wisdom and Knowledge, raises our Souls up to God, and entertains them with the Love and the Ad-

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miration of that best of Beings ; and above all things, secures an eternal Interest, the Salvation of our Souls, and the glorious Resurrection of our Bodies into immortal Life.

But a bad Man loves but one Part of himself, and that the meanest Part too, and made much more mean and vile by being loved alone. His *Self-love* is nothing else but the Love of the Flesh, and of the Lusts, and Appetites and Pleasures of it, a Love of this World, and all the Objects of Sense, which gratify a carnal and fleshly Mind ; the Soul is no part of his Care, so far from it, that he is not willing to believe he has a Soul, unless it be to subdue Reason to Sense and brutish Passions, to stifle the natural Notions of a Deity, to root up all the Seeds of Piety and Virtue, or to charm his Conscience, that it may not chide and condemn, and disturb him in his Enjoyments.

For the understanding of this we must observe, that when the Scripture condemns the Love of ourselves, it does not mean our personal Self, for so every Man does, and must love himself or his own Person, but it is to love something for ourselves, which we will have to be ourselves, when God never made it to be so, which is *our own Self*, or *a Self of our own making* ; and to love this Self in Opposition to the Love of God and Men, which is to love Ourselves *only*, and to make all other

other things subordinate to Self, which is the Notion of a *vicious Self-love*.

1. It is a Self of our own making ; that is, it is what a Sinner will call Himself, and will account his whole Self ; and in pleasing of which he placeth his whole Happiness, though it be but a little part of that Self, which God made. God made Man Soul and Body, but such Men will call nothing themselves but Flesh : God made Man for a rational and intellectual Happiness, as he made him a reasonable Creature ; but such Men place their whole Happiness in Sense. Now Flesh is not the Man of God's making ; the Pleasures of Sense are not the Happiness of a Man : Man was made to enjoy the Pleasures of Sense in conjunction with those of Reason, and in subordination to the diviner Pleasures of the Mind ; but a sensual Happiness he was not made for ; that is the Happiness of an inferior and brutish Nature : And those who will have this to be their Self and their Happiness, are their own Creatures, not God's ; and are lovers of *their own selves, of their own inventions, their own ways and devices*, as the Scripture speaks.

2. Such Men are lovers of themselves in opposition to the Love of God ; that is, they are *lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God*, as the Apostle here speaks : They prefer their own Will and Humour, and the Gratification of their Lusts, before the Will and Laws of

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God, and in Contradiction to them. A good Man lives in subordination to God, as a Creature ought to do to his Maker and Sovereign Lord; the Will of God is the Rule of his Will and Choice, the Love of God gives Laws and Bounds to his Love of himself: He pleaseth himself in such Instances as God allows, he denies his own Will and Appetites, Inclinations and Interests, when they oppose the Will and Laws of God: Such a Man can hardly be said, to have any Self, to have any Will, any Love, any Desires of his own, for God is all this to him; God lives in him, he is more God's, than he is own, as *St. Paul* speaks. *I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me*, Gal. ii. 20. But a bad Man hath divided himself from God, cast off his Obedience, affects an independent State, to stand by himself, and to be his own Lord and Master, and a God to himself; and such a Man is properly said to love himself, for he distinguishes himself from God, and prefers himself before him.

3dly, Such Men are properly said to be Lovers of themselves, because they love themselves in opposition to the rest of Mankind; they gratify their Lusts, and serve their private Interests, without any regard to the Laws of Justice or Charity: It is their Principle to do good to themselves without ever being concerned, what either private Men, or public Societies suffer by it: They are the whole
World

World to themselves, and have no body else to please or take care of, unless they can serve their own Designs by it: Such Men are properly Lovers of themselves, that is, only of themselves, for they love no body else: And this is the sordid, narrow, selfish Spirit of Flesh and Sense, which dwells within itself, is its own Center, and its own Circumference; for Flesh is a narrow Principle, can have no Pleasures, nor feel any Pains but its own, and therefore must confine its Love and Care to its Self: But a Man, who has a truly great and divine Mind, who loves all Men as himself, and loves himself in conjunction with the rest of Mankind, can by no means be called a selfish Man, or a Lover of himself, for he has an universal Love to human Nature, which begins with himself, but extends to all the World.

This is a plain and short Account, what this *vicious Self-love* is, and why it is so called.

II. The Second Thing I proposed, was to shew how dangerous and perilous such Times must needs be, wherein this *Self-love* prevails. Now those are perilous Times, which expose Men to great Dangers, and to great Troubles and Calamities, and that with respect to their own private Fortunes, with respect to the Public, and with respect to the State of Religion; and what a malignant Influence this *vicious Self-love* has upon all these great and dear Interests, is so visible, that

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methinks it should need no Proof; and therefore I shall at present only give some brief Hints of it.

And I shall not here take notice how much such *Self-lovers* suffer from themselves, and from their own *Self-love*; for though this makes themselves miserable, it does not make the Times dangerous; the Times may be very prosperous, and good Men very happy, though such Sinners may *reap the fruits of their own works, and be filled with their own devices*; though they sacrifice their Honour, their Estates, their Health, their Lives to Intemperance and Lust; though Ambition heats their Brains into a Distraction, and Cares, and Disappointments break their Hearts, or Guilt disturbs their Consciences, and fills them with Rage and furious Despair; the World is not much concerned in this; let such *Self-lovers* look to it, and thank themselves for what they suffer; but then the Times are dangerous with respect to our private and personal Interests, when Men are in great Danger from one another; when they are never secure from private Injuries; when they know not whom to trust, nor with whom to converse; when it is hard to find a Friend, and almost impossible to escape an Enemy; when the greatest Virtue, Innocence, Inoffensiveness; nay, the divinest Charity, and all the Charms of an obliging Conversation, cannot secure Men from Envy, Rapine, and Detraction,

tion, from the Venom of Tongues, or from more malicious Designs against their Lives and Fortunes; such a State as this will make all good Men wish as *David* did, *O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest; lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness, I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest*, Psalm lv. 6, 7, 8.

And this is the very State which *Self-love* puts Mankind into, when it prevails in the World. This a late admired Philosopher calls the State of Nature, wherein every Man is a Wolf to a Man, but in Truth, it is only the State of this vicious *Self-love*, which is the Corruption and Degeneracy of a reasonable and sociable Nature. If Man was made for Society, it cannot be his Nature to love nobody but himself, which is a Contradiction to the Nature and End of Societies. He must first put off Nature, if that be this *Self-love*, before he can be capable of living in Society, which seems very unaccountable, that a Creature, who was made for Society, should not be fit for Society till he change his Nature.

For Men cannot live together in Safety, while they are all acted by this Principle; *Self-love* makes every Man his own Center, and the Center draws all to itself, all that is within its Sphere of Activity. Pride is *Self-love*, such an Esteem for ourselves, as values no Man's Honour or Reputation but our own;

own ; and this draws all Honour to itself, is not contented unless it can outshine all others, and either by a greater Brightness swallow them up, or eclipse them by black and misty Vapours, by all the Arts of Infamy and Reproach.

Covetousness is *Self-love*, when Men will be rich, whoever be poor, and by whatever Arts they can do it ; and this draws all Riches to itself, and snatches them from all that come within its reach ; and what Injustice and Violence, Theft, Murders, Perjuries does this occasion !

Self-love is the Love of the Flesh, the Love of carnal and sensual Pleasures, which will please itself whoever be grieved and injured by it : Such brutish Sensualists have no regard to the Honour and Peace of Families, to the Modesty of Virgins, to the sacred Vows of Wives, to the Stain and Infamy of Posterity ; nay, many times not to the Dignity of human Nature, but gratify their Lusts in Contradiction to them all.

Where *Self-love* reigns, there is no Place for Compassion, for Charity, for Justice, for true Friendship ; every thing must give way to Self ; and let any Man judge whether such be not perilous Times ; some such Men there are always in the World, and great Numbers of them too, and we daily feel what Mischiefs they do ; but the more the Numbers of them increase, the more this
Self-

Self-love prevails, the more intolerable will human Conversation be.

And if we allow, that Pride, Ambition, Covetousness, Sensuality, are great Enemies to the Peace and Prosperity, to the good Order and Government of any Nation, we must grant that *Self-love*, which is the impure Fountain, from whence all these corrupt Streams flow, is very destructive to human Societies too ; it corrupts public Justice, loosens the reigns of Government, softens and emasculates Mens Spirits, renders them unfit for Counsel, or for Arms ; makes them contemptible to their Neighbours, and brings down the Judgments of God upon them.

Is any thing so destructive to any State, as Divisions and Factions at home ? and was there ever any State-Faction without *Self-love* and private Interest at the Bottom ? when great Men will rival one another, and are impatient either of Superiors or Equals ; and prosecute their private Animosities with the public Danger ; and when common Safety requires united Hearts and Counsels, will not adjourn their private Quarrels, nor sacrifice their private Interests and Resentments to save a Nation.

It is wonderful to observe, that when a Kingdom is divided into Parties and Factions, the most threatening Dangers are so far from uniting them, that they take Advantage of public Fears and Apprehensions, to get ground
of

of their Adversaries, though they hazard the whole by it: And what are such Factions but a Combination of *Self-lovers*, who divide themselves from the public Interest, unless their private Humours and Intrigues may take place; when a Party will be the whole, and if others will not them be the whole, let the whole perish?

This is the narrow, peevish, unfociable Spirit of *Self-love*, a Temper, which generous Heathens had in the greatest Abhorrence; and till a more public Spirit revive in the World, we must never expect to see easy and happy Days: The Times will be perilous, while Men are such Lovers of themselves.

But how deplorable must the State of Religion needs be, when *Self-love* prevails, which is such a direct Contradiction to all Piety and Virtue, to the Love of God and Men? The Apostle indeed tells us of these Lovers of themselves, *that they have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof*. They make a Shew of religious Worship, and it may be a very glorious and pompous Shew too, for this may serve their Interest, and give them Reputation with their Prince, or with the People, but their Religion has no Power upon their Lives, cannot subdue any one Lust, as it is impossible it should, while they are acted by *Self-love*.

And yet it is much to be desired, that such Men would retain *a form of godliness*; that they

they would not publicly affront Religion, nor ridicule all that is sacred ; but it is in vain to hope for thus much from all of them. *St. Paul's* perilous Times was a very modest and a very religious Age to ours, wherein Men seem to be ashamed to be thought religious ; and therefore, if they ever think fit to go to Church, take great care that no Man, who sees them shall suspect, that they come thither to worship God.

But though few Men attain to such an outrageous Contempt of Religion as this, yet all the Corruptions of Religion are more owing to *Self-love* than to innocent Mistakes. This secretly influences Mens Faith, and forms their Notions and Opinions. This invents a *Form of Godliness*, and turns Religion into Shew and Pageantry ; when Men bring *Self-love* into the Church, it quickly turns true Religion out ; it is Pride, and Ambition, or Covetousness, and a Love of sensual Pleasures which makes Men Infidels and Heretics, and occasions all the Schisms which divide the Church. For when such *Self-lovers* cannot cast off all Religion, they must fit their Religion to *Self-love*, to serve their Lusts, or to give them Security in the Enjoyment of them ; when they cannot raise Self up to the Terms of Religion, they must bring Religion down to Self : It were easy to give undeniable Proofs, and infinite Examples of this : But I must proceed.—

For

For having shewn what this *vicious Self-love* is, and what Mischiefs it does in the World, both to Mens private Fortunes, to public Societies, and to the Church of God ; it remains

III. To consider the Folly and Unreasonableness, as well as Impiety of this Principle. All the Wickedness that is committed in the World, and most of the Miseries which Mankind suffer, are owing to *Self-love* ; and could we convince Men of the Folly, and Unreasonableness, and Impiety of this, it would lay the Ax to the very Root of all Wickedness, it would reform the World, and heal all the Maladies and Distempers of it : And to do this the more effectually, I shall distinctly apply what I have to say, to the several Notions of *Self-love*.—

1. Let us consider *Self-love*, as it signifies the Love of Flesh and Sense, when we love a Part of ourselves for the Whole, and expect our whole intire Happiness from the Gratification of some inferior Appetites, which, at first hearing, appears as absurd and impossible, as it is to make a Part the Whole. The greatest Part of Mankind, in all Ages, have made this Experiment, but no Man was ever made happy by it. We see infinite Examples of miserable Sinners, and the most prosperous always find that they want something else to make them happy ; and would Men wisely consider the Nature of Things, they would find that it is impossible it should be otherwise.

What

What is Happiness, but such a State of Ease and Rest and Self-enjoyment, as is agreeable to our Natures? And can a reasonable Soul then find its complete and perfect Satisfaction in the Pleasures of Sense? The Perfection and the Happiness of our Natures is the same Thing; and therefore that which perfects our Natures, must perfect our Happiness. Is Sense then the Perfection of a reasonable Nature? If not, how can it be its perfect Happiness? Is not Wisdom and Knowledge the Perfection of the Understanding? Is not the Love of the best and most excellent Being the Perfection of the Will? And is not this the Perfection of a reasonable Soul? And is it possible to make a Man happy, who feels none of those divine and exalted Pleasures, which are proper to a Mind? Well! but if the Enjoyments of Sense will give a complete and intire Satisfaction, that will make the Man happy, when he has no Relish of any other Pleasures; and then we need not dispute which Pleasures are greatest in themselves, when the Man has what he likes best, and is happy in it, which is as much as to say, that it makes no Difference whether a Man enjoy the Happiness of a Man or of a Beast; that a Beast is as happy a Creature as a Man, a Worm as an Angel, because it has what satisfies, and wants and desires no more. But however let us consider whether the Pleasures of Sense can give perfect Ease and Satisfaction

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to a reasonable Soul; that they do not, all Men find, and the Reason why they cannot do it is very plain.

The Pleasures of Sense cannot give perfect Ease and Satisfaction without a full, unconfin'd, and undisturbed Enjoyment, and without such an Enjoyment as equals the Desire.

As for the First, not to take notice how apt Men are to be disturbed in their Enjoyments from without, there is enough within the very Frame and Constitution of a reasonable Soul to disturb them: For they find there a natural Sense of the Difference between Good and Evil, a natural Modesty which makes them blush in secret at some infamous Vices, and sours the Pleasures, and frequently interrupts the Commission of them; a natural Belief of a God, who is the Judge of the World, and the Avenger of all Wickedness; a strong Perswasion, that they shall live after Death, and be rewarded and punished according to their Works: I need not tell you, how uneasy such Thoughts as these make the Enjoyment of all sensual Pleasures, and an uneasy Happiness is a Contradiction; that if God intended Man for a sensual Happiness, I must confess he is the worst contriv'd Creature in the World, as if he were made by Chance, not by a wise Creator; for the Principles of his Nature disturb and contradict the Enjoyment of his natural Happiness.

piness. Or whether you will call this Nature, or Education, or what you please, there are very few Men, with the Help of all the Wit and Philosophy of Atheists, can deliver themselves from this Belief, and from these Fears; and much fewer do it, than pretend to do so; and therefore there are very few who have an easy and undisturbed Enjoyment of sensual Pleasures, that is, who are easy and happy in them, unless to sin with Fear, with Shame, with guilty Remorse, with frightful Presages of Judgment, be an easy and undisturbed Enjoyment.

As for the Second it is very plain, that the Enjoyment of sensual Pleasures can never answer the vast and boundless Desires of Happiness in human Nature; a reasonable and intelligent Being has no other Bounds to its Desires of Happiness, but the most perfect and perpetual Enjoyment, whereas sensual Pleasures, besides all other Disappointments, must wait the Returns of Strength, and Appetite, and Objects, and therefore cannot always be had, or cannot always please. Sensual Pleasures can never be the Happiness of any Creature, which has any higher Principle than Appetite; for Appetite is the utmost Bounds of sensual Enjoyments: But when Knowledge serves instead of Appetite, as it must do in reasonable Creatures, it creates such Desires as no Appetites can answer: This makes sensual Men so insatiable in their

Desires of Pleasure, though Brute Beasts know their Measures, because they misplace their natural Desires of Happiness, which are boundless and infinite, upon sensual Pleasures, which are limited and confined : And what Disappointments and Distractions must this create, when there is no Proportion between the Desire and the Object ; besides those sensible Mischiefs of it, which do not much contribute to their Happiness. For when Desire forces an Appetite, beyond the Strength of Nature, and the natural End and Use of such Pleasures, it impairs their Health, weakens their Bodies, shortens their Lives, or makes them miserable, which are the common Rewards of Intemperance and Lust. These, Beasts, who are governed by Appetite, know nothing of ; Sense is their Happiness, and Appetite is the Measure of their Enjoyment, and sensual Pleasures can fill and satisfy a mere sensual Appetite ; but when Knowledge is both the Reason and the Measure of our Desires, sensual Pleasures can never fill such Desires ; for we know more than Nature itself can enjoy, and yet when we place our highest Happiness in it, must desire all we know, and as long as we know, which is longer than we can enjoy : This proves that nothing can be the Happiness of a knowing and reasonable Creature, but intellectual Pleasures, where Knowledge is Enjoyment, and then Enjoyment will equal Knowledge and Desire ;

Desire; but when Knowledge and Enjoyment are two Things, they may be parted, and may be unequal; and such a Creature cannot be completely happy.

Secondly, All Men who believe, that there is a God, must confess, that it is very foolish and very wicked to love ourselves in opposition to God. Is it possible for a reasonable Creature to be happy, who separates himself from God; the World may much better subsist without the Sun; for God is the Life of a reasonable Soul, the brightest Object of our Minds, eternal Truth and Wisdom; there is nothing worth knowing without God; for to contemplate his Wisdom, and Goodness, and Power in all things, is that which gives a Relish to all other Knowledge. *In him we live, move, and have our being*; no wise Man would be contented to live in a World which has not a God to govern it, nor to live any longer in it than he can trust to, and depend on his Protection; and is it then the way to be happy to divide ourselves from God? Can any Man choose better for himself, than God can? Do we know ourselves so well as he that made us; does not God know what Happiness he hath made us for? Or does he envy us the Happiness for which he made us? Why then did he make us for such a Happiness? So impious is it to think, that God has forbid us any thing which is our true Happiness. So vain is it to hope, to make our-

selves happy in contradiction to the Will and Laws of God. No Man thinks honourably of God, who does not believe, that his Laws are the most infallible Methods of our Happiness, as well as the Trial of our Subjection and Obedience; and he who does so, can never think of making himself happy by disobeying God.

But supposing it were otherwise, is it not perfect Distraction to oppose ourselves against God! Can we make ourselves happy whether he will or no? Are we a fit Match for infinite Power? Can we resist his Almighty Arm? How easily can he look us into Misery and Confusion? And does it not become us to submit to him, and rather choose to obey his Will than to suffer his Vengeance? This is the natural State of a Creature, to live in subjection to his Maker and sovereign Lord, to receive Laws from him, and to give up himself without any Reserve to his Government and Disposal; and therefore this is the natural Method of our Happiness too.

Thirdly, As for the third Notion of *Self-love*, to love ourselves in opposition to the Love of Men, to divide ourselves from the rest of Mankind, and to carry on a separate Interest, to which, as far as we are able, we make all other Interests give place: This is so hateful a Temper, that the very naming of it, is enough to expose it. No Man dares to undertake its Defence; those who are most guilty

guilty of it dare not own it, but disguise it with some more popular Appearances. A great and generous Mind that is concerned for all the World, that does all the Good it can, that is ready to sacrifice his private Ease, Satisfaction, and Fortunes, nay Life itself, to serve his Country, or to cleanse the World of Monsters, is the Darling and Favourite of Mankind; he is loved, he is revered of all, as a common Friend of human Nature and human Societies. But a Man who loves no body but himself, is an universal Enemy, and all Men ought to have a care of him, and all Men will despise and abhor him, when they know him: These *Self-lovers* themselves, when they see their own Picture in another Face, will spit at it; for those who love no body but themselves, yet desire that all Men should love them, and be very tender of their Concernments, though they value no body's Interest and Happiness but their own.

But though this *Self-love* be universally condemned, yet it is too universally practised, and therefore I shall briefly shew, how impossible it is, that this *Self-love*, which divides us from the rest of Mankind, should make us happy. The Principles of human Nature, make the Exercise of it very uneasy, and that can never be our Happiness, which is a Force and Violence to Nature.

We feel a natural Compassion for the Sufferings of Mankind, especially of innocent Men, who have not deserved it; and as well as any Man loves himself, this makes it very painful to serve his own Interest by doing injury to others.

One of the first Principles of Morality, which all Men confess to be highly reasonable, is to do to other Men what we desire they should do to us, which is the fundamental Maxim both of Justice and Charity, and in other Words, is to love all Men as ourselves; and no Man can violate this Law, that is, no Man can love himself in opposition to the rest of Mankind, without falling under the Censures and Reproaches of his own Mind, which is no happy State.

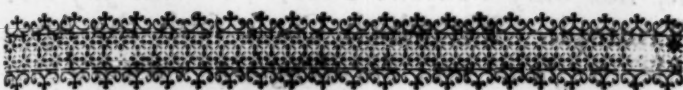
One of the divinest Pleasures of human Nature is to do good; this I take to be the great Advantage and Glory of Riches and Power, that it makes Men public Patrons, and tutelar Angels to their Fellow-creatures, which is the nearest Resemblance of the Perfection and Happiness of God, and, in the Pagan World, made Gods of Men: But *Self-love* knows nothing of this Happiness, but destroys not only the Sense, but the Notion of it.

But to set aside other Considerations, Mankind will not suffer a Man to make himself easy and happy by *Self-love*: When he is known, they combine against him, as a common Enemy, they load him with Infamy and Reproach, they strip him of his ill-gotten

ten Riches, and severely revenge his Injuries : This is the great End of human Government, and the proper Use of the Rods and Axes of Princes, to restrain and govern *Self-love*, and to punish the Outrages it commits. —

This is enough to satisfy us of the Folly and Unreasonableness of this Principle, and how impossible it is, that *Self-love* should make any Man happy. I will add but one Argument more to dissuade you from it, that this *Self-love* can never enter into Heaven. That is a holy Place, a spiritual State, wherein nothing can enter that is unclean : *Flesh and blood*, whether a fleshly carnal Mind, or an earthly Body, *cannot inherit the kingdom of God*. There God is all in all, there is universal Love among all those blessed Inhabitants, and therefore there can be nothing of Self. O that blessed Place, where there is perfect Unity and Harmony of Souls, no Parties and Factions, no Emulations and Jealousies, no private Interests, no Rivals ; where all center in God ; and embrace each other, and mingle Flames, and feel and rejoice in each others Happiness !

To which blessed Place, God of his infinite Mercy bring us all, through our Lord Jesus Christ : To whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now and for ever. Amen.



S E R M O N XVI.

Preached at the *Temple Church.*

2 Cor. iv. 18.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

THIS is the Principle of that true Greatness of Mind, which appeared in the Apostles and primitive Christians, and enabled them to do that which the Pagan Philosophy boasted of without doing, *viz.* to contemn the World, and to live above its Hopes and Fears; to bear the Miseries of Life, and to despise the Pleasures of it; to suffer Shame and Reproach, and the Loss of all Things, and Death itself, made as terrible as Pain could make it,

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it, not only without Fear, but with Joy and Triumph. For which Cause saith the Apostle, *we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day; for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal,*

By the *Things which are seen*, is meant, all the good and all the evil Things of this Life; by the *Things which are not seen*, all the Happiness and Miseries of the Life to come. But is not this a very strange Choice, to prefer what is absent and unseen, before what is present and sensible? To be unconcerned about the Happiness or Miseries of this Life, and to live upon unseen Hopes and Fears? No, saith the Apostle, we have all the Reason in the World to do so, because seen Things are but temporal, and unseen Things are eternal. This World will last but a little while, the Fashion of this World passeth away; but the World to come will have no End: And this makes such a Difference between seen and unseen Things, that there can be no reasonable Competition, as there is no Comparison between them. So that in speaking to these Words, there are Two Things distinctly to be considered.

I. The

and Preference of unseen Things. 381

- I. The Reasonableness of this Principle of *looking to unseen things*, or of living by Faith, for it is Faith alone, that can give us a View of the invisible World. And,
- II. The Reasonableness of this Choice, in preferring *unseen* before *seen* Things, because, *the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

I. The Reasonableness of this Christian Principle of Action, of looking at *unseen things*, or living by Faith. Some unthinking Men are apt to make a Jest of believing; if you have any natural Reasons, or sensible Demonstrations, they will hearken to you; but Faith is below a Man of Wit and Philosophy, who knows how many Cheats and Impostors there have been in the World. But such Men little consider, how necessary Faith is in human Life, that they themselves in a thousand Cases, have no other Principle to act upon in the greatest Concernments of this Life, and that upon much less Evidence than we have for another World.

There are but three Ways of knowing any thing, Sense, or Reason, or Faith, which last extends further, and has a more universal Influence upon the Government of our Lives, than either Sense or Reason. Our whole Conversation with Mankind is resolved into Believing,

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it, not only without Fear, but with Joy and Triumph. For which Cause saith the Apostle, *we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day; for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

By the *Things which are seen*, is meant, all the good and all the evil Things of this Life; by the *Things which are not seen*, all the Happiness and Miseries of the Life to come. But is not this a very strange Choice, to prefer what is absent and unseen, before what is present and sensible? To be unconcerned about the Happiness or Miseries of this Life, and to live upon unseen Hopes and Fears? No, saith the Apostle, we have all the Reason in the World to do so, because seen Things are but temporal, and unseen Things are eternal. This World will last but a little while, the Fashion of this World passeth away; but the World to come will have no End: And this makes such a Difference between seen and unseen Things, that there can be no reasonable Competition, as there is no Comparison between them. So that in speaking to these Words, there are Two Things distinctly to be considered.

I. The

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- I. The Reasonableness of this Principle of *looking to unseen things*, or of living by Faith, for it is Faith alone, that can give us a View of the invisible World. And,
- II. The Reasonableness of this Choice, in preferring *unseen* before *seen* Things, because, *the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

I. The Reasonableness of this Christian Principle of Action, of looking at *unseen things*, or living by Faith. Some unthinking Men are apt to make a Jest of believing; if you have any natural Reasons, or sensible Demonstrations, they will hearken to you; but Faith is below a Man of Wit and Philosophy, who knows how many Cheats and Impostors there have been in the World. But such Men little consider, how necessary Faith is in human Life, that they themselves in a thousand Cases, have no other Principle to act upon in the greatest Concernments of this Life, and that upon much less Evidence than we have for another World.

There are but three Ways of knowing any thing, Sense, or Reason, or Faith, which last extends further, and has a more universal Influence upon the Government of our Lives, than either Sense or Reason. Our whole Conversation with Mankind is resolved into Believing,

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lieving, into a civil, historical, or political Faith; all human Commerce and Inter-
course is founded on it, and there are very
few Actions of our Lives, that can be per-
formed without it; that he who will not be-
lieve must not live in this World. And is
it not absurd and ridiculous then to laugh at
believing, when they might as well laugh
Sense and Reason out of the World, and live
as well without them?

Now if we must live by Faith in this World,
if we must believe, and must trust one ano-
ther, if we must depend on Mens Word, or
Oath, or Friendship, or Honesty, though we
can have no natural Certainty or Demonstra-
tion of moral Causes, what Reason can there
be to banish Faith out of Religion, which is
of such absolute Necessity in all the other
Concernments of Life? One would think
there should be less need of Faith for this
World than for the next, which is an in-
visible State, and can be certainly known
only by Revelation; and if Faith be ever rea-
sonable, it is most reasonable where it is most
necessary, where there is no other Means of
Knowledge.

This is enough to shew you, how little
those Men understand themselves, who ridi-
cule Faith, which is to ridicule human Na-
ture and all human Conversation. If we
may, if we must believe, if we cannot live
without believing, it must make a Man con-
tempt-

temptible to talk against all Faith, which is an essential Part of human Knowledge, and a necessary Principle of moral Prudence.

Some Men are so afraid of being thought easy and credulous, that they run into the other Extreme, and will believe nothing, at least nothing concerning another World; and think Infidelity must needs be a Mark of Wit and Understanding, because it is directly opposite to Credulity, which is a Mark of Folly; and by the same Rule Covetousness must be a Virtue, because it is the opposite Extreme to Prodigality. Credulity and Infidelity both argue the same Weakness of Judgment; for it is as great want of Judgment, not to believe upon sufficient Evidence, as to believe without it; but Credulity is the most pardonable, because it is the better-natured Fault, and argues the better Temper of Mind. A credulous Man believes too well of Mankind, and therefore is apt to trust them too soon; or he is very religiously inclined, and that disposes him to believe all religious Tales: But an Infidel distrusts all Mankind, and fears or hates all Religion, and therefore will believe nothing: That of all the Men in the World, I would least trust myself with an Infidel; for those who distrust all Mankind, and hate God, know some Reason why they should do it, and they must find it in themselves.

Now if Faith be a reasonable Principle of Action, if we may have such moral Evidence
of

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of Things, which we cannot demonstrate, as a wise and cautious Man may and ought to rely on, and which no wise Man will contradict, or act against; why should not the same Evidence satisfy us, with reference to another World? If you would scorn a Man, who should reject *Cæsar's* Commentaries, or any other approved Writings, against the Faith of all History; why does it not deserve as much scorn to reject the History of the Gospel, which is the best attested History in the World? If it be reasonable to believe, is it not very unreasonable to demand any other Evidence than what belongs to Faith? To demand the Evidence of Sense, or Demonstration, for pure Matters of Faith? When we have all the Evidence of Faith, all the Evidence which a wise Man would ask for the Proof of any thing, which he did not and cannot see; to demand more, is to reject Faith itself, and to condemn all Mankind of Credulity, who believe any thing. And indeed, whoever considers what kind of Objections, Infidels urge against Christianity, will find, that they all tend either to downright Scepticism, or to reject all the Evidence of Faith, as unfit for a wise Man to act on, which overthrows all human as well as divine Faith.

I know there are some, who think it reasonable to demand much greater Evidence for another World, than what may satisfy a wise Man in the Affairs and Concernments of
this

this Life: And thanks be to God, we have greater Evidence and Certainty of Faith for another World, than we have for most of the Concernments of this Life, in which we must act by Faith, and moral Evidence; as much greater, as a divine Faith is more certain than human Faith: But it is not reasonable to demand any other kind of Evidence for the next World, than the Evidence of Faith, because we can have no other Evidence for *unseen things*, and if we have the highest Evidence that Faith can give us, it is not reasonable to ask more.

But yet, why should not that Evidence satisfy us for another World, which in a thousand Cases satisfies us in this? What Excuse can we make for our Infidelity, if God give us such Evidence for another World, as wise Men think sufficient to act on in this? Their Reasons for this have so little Appearance of Sense, that they may look like Abuses, and yet they are the best, and the only Reasons they can give.

1. That they are forced in many Cases to act upon Faith and Hope, and trust in this World, because in many things they can have no better Evidence, and yet are under a Necessity of acting, and choosing one thing or other, if they will live in the World: But they are under no Necessity of believing any Religion, and therefore may demand such Evidence, as will force an Assent, and leave

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no Possibility of a Mistake or Deceit. For why should they believe any thing, which they are not absolutely certain of, when they need not believe it unless they will.

Now both Parts of this Answer are very faulty. Wise Men do not act upon moral Evidence, and the Assurances of human Faith, merely because they can have no better, but because they think this sufficient, and to be a wise and reasonable Principle of Action; and therefore they act with great Security, where they have no other Evidence, and are under no Necessity one way nor other, did they not think it wise, and safe, and prudent; which shews, what the Sense of the wisest Part of Mankind is concerning the Evidence of Faith.

And yet it is much stranger, that any Man, who ever heard of another World, and of Heaven and Hell, can think it indifferent, whether he believe it or not. He must either believe, or disbelieve it, and the Consequence either Way is of infinite Concernment: They have a mighty Mastery over themselves, if they can believe and disbelieve what they will; there are such Degrees of Evidence, even of moral Evidence, as wise Men can't resist, and I think that makes Faith necessary, if we believe like Men. But when we read in the Gospel, *he that believes shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned*, this lays a terrible Necessity upon us; for if the
Gospel

Gospel be true, and we continue Infidels, we must perish for ever : And if Necessity will justify our believing and acting upon reasonable moral Evidence, though we have not the Evidence of Sense or natural Demonstrations, those who do not think eternal Happiness or Misery to be Necessity enough, let them find a greater if they can.

2. Another Pretence is, that the vast Difference between this World and the next, if there be another World, requires a very different Degree of Evidence. The Things of this World are of such little Consequence, that they may better venture, though they should be deceived : But Religion is of eternal Importance, and therefore it concerns them not to be too credulous in such Matters.

Now though there is a vast Difference between this World and the next, I cannot bear, that Men who believe no other World, should make this Difference ; for if this Life be all that they expect, no Man can ever venture more than all, whether it be Time or Eternity ; and if they will venture their temporal All, upon the Evidence of Faith, why is it unreasonable to venture our eternal All upon it, when we can have, and indeed need no better Evidence. But this very Consideration of the vast Difference between Time and Eternity, turns upon themselves, and makes it wise and reasonable to

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act upon much less Evidence, than we have for the other World. For in Matters of such vast Importance, as every thing is that is eternal, it concerns us always to be on the surest side where we venture least, if it should happen that we are mistaken. And let any Man consider, which is the surest side, to believe, or to disbelieve Christianity, and a future State; if Christianity be true, and there be an eternal State of Rewards and Punishments in the next Life, if we disbelieve it we are miserable for ever; but if we do believe it, and it should not prove true, we lose nothing by it, but the transient Pleasures of Sin, and instead of them, have all the present Ease and Satisfaction of Virtue and great Hopes; and those who have tried both will tell you, that the Pleasures of Virtue far exceed the Pleasures of Sin, and that the Hope and Expectation of immortal Life does more ravish and transport, than the Possession of this World can do.

The Truth is, the eternal Miseries of the next World are so very terrible, that no wise Man would run the least Hazard of them, but instead of demanding a demonstrative Certainty, that there is such a Place of Torment, would demand a demonstrative Certainty that there is not, before he would venture. And the Happiness of the other World so exceeds all our Imaginations, that a very little Evidence would perswade a wise Man

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to venture any thing, to be happy for ever.

The Sum of what I have said, in short is this: To despise all Faith, is to ridicule human Nature and human Conversation; for God has made us such Creatures, that three Parts of our Lives must be governed by Faith, and if Faith be a foolish, absurd, unsafe Principle of Action, I am sure Man is a very wretched and contemptible Creature; for Man must live by Faith. We cannot see each others Hearts and Thoughts, and I believe no Man desires that other Men should see his Heart, how much soever he may desire to see theirs; and then we cannot converse with each other, with any Pleasure and Security, without believing. We are finite Creatures, our Lives are short, and we can be but in one Place at a Time; and if we must believe nothing, but what we ourselves see, what a narrow contemptible Thing is human Knowledge; and therefore we must allow of the Testimony of Eye and Ear Witnesses, and of credible Histories, which is the Evidence of Faith, and furnishes us with the best, as well as with the largest Part of our Knowledge, and with the wisest Rules and Examples of Life. And though we may be, and often are mistaken, this only makes Men more prudent and cautious, not Infidels: But a divine Faith gives us a much more infallible Assurance, than human Faith

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can do; for we know, God cannot deceive us, as Men may; and then if we have as great, nay, much greater Evidence for a divine Revelation, than we have for any other matters of Fact at such a Distance; we have all the Evidence of the most certain human Faith, and the infallible Certainty of a divine Faith.

Nay, if they will but allow, which no considering Man can deny, that we have as good Evidence for the History of the Gospel, as they have for any other History, which they most firmly believe, it will be impossible for them to give a wise Reason, why they do not believe the Gospel. Nay were there less Evidence than there is, the vast Importance of it, which is no less than eternal Life and Death, is Reason enough to a wise Man to choose the surest Side, and to live by the Faith of another World.

II. Let us now consider the Reason and the Wisdom of this Choice. *We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

The Difference between Temporal and Eternal, is so demonstrative a Reason, why we should prefer eternal unseen Things, before temporal seen Things; that it is hard to add any thing to give a new Strength to it, if
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Men do but understand what these Words Time and Eternity signify.

Suppose you should ask any Man, whether he would choose to live threescore or fourscore Years, or to live for ever, he would certainly wonder at your Question, and think it an Affront; since Nature teaches all Men to answer it without the least Dispute or Consideration about it. All Men love Life, and above all things desire to live for ever; which is so strong a Passion, that I doubt not at all, but the generality of Mankind, (supposing no other Life after this) would rather choose to be immortal Beggars, than mortal Princes; or at least would content themselves with a very mean Station in this World, and to take their Chance as to the Sufferings of it, rather than not to be. *For life is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing to the eye, to behold the sun.* And if Men, who know no better, would be contented to take their Fortune in this World, and to venture an eternal Round of uncertain and changeable Scenes, and prefer this before fourscore or a hundred Years of the greatest Prosperity and Glory; one would think, there should be no Comparison between the most prosperous State of this Life, and the eternal unchangeable Happiness of the next.

And yet we find by Experience, that though most Men are desirous to live as long as they can in this World, and would submit to any

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Conditions, which would make them immortal here, they think the Case very much altered, when you promise them immortal Life in the next World; as is very evident from this, that they will not submit to such a State of Discipline and Mortification to save their Souls, as they chearfully submit to, to save their Lives. *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath, will he give for his life;* but they will not part with all they have to save their Souls; nay will venture their Souls to get or to save an Estate, or a very little Part of it. And yet (which makes it more wonderful) there are great Numbers of such Men, who profess to believe, that there is another World, and that they must be happy or miserable for ever. This is very unaccountable, that all Men should agree, that what is eternal ought to be preferred before what is temporal, and yet that the Generality of Mankind should prefer temporal Things before the Things which are eternal. What is to be said to these Men? Will you prove, that Eternity is to be preferred before Time? This is lost Labour, for they all own it, and have a natural Sense of it, which is more powerful than any other Arguments. Will you then persuade them to prefer eternal before temporal Things? But by what Arguments will you persuade, if Eternity itself cannot persuade? In such Cases where there is no need of disputing, no need to convince

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Mens Reasons, I know nothing left, but to paint and represent, to draw such lively Images and Pictures, as may move Mens Passions, and give them a feeling Sense of the Difference between Time and Eternity. And to do this to as great Advantage as I can, I shall 1st. Consider the Difference between Time and Eternity. And, 2^{dly}, The Difference between Things Temporal and Things Eternal.

1st. The Difference between Time and Eternity. You all see and feel what Time is, it passeth away swiftly, and we pass away with it; when we look back, it is but like a Dream, or *a watch in the night, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.* Some few Years clear the Stage of this World, and bring new busy Actors, or idle Spectators on it; and by that time we can well turn ourselves round, we see all new Faces and new Scenes of Things, and ourselves hastening after, though we should happen to stay a little behind our Company. But who can represent Eternity? To live without end, a Duration, which it is not in the Power of Numbers to measure, and therefore no Value can be put upon it.

To form such an Image of this in your Minds, as no Words can express, make Eternity present to you. Suppose this World to be at an end, as it will very suddenly be with us all, and that we were at this time
in

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in an eternal State of Happiness or Misery; either with *Lazarus* in *Abraham's* Bosom, or with *Dives* in Hell, tormented in endless Flames. Whatever the Happiness, or Misery of the next State is, is it possible for us now to conceive, what Passions will accompany this Thought, that whether we find ourselves happy or miserable, we shall be so for ever? What is the secure Triumph of a never fading Crown? What is the Terror, Confusion, Amazement of a never dying Worm? Thus it will be with us, as soon as we remove out of this World; and if the Thoughts of eternal Miseries, when we think seriously of them, do now astonish us; if the Hope of immortal Life does now transport good Men, and give them the Victory over this present World, what will it do, when they shall see and feel, what they now only fear or hope?

And is this so unreasonable a thing, to suppose the other World present, which a very few Years, it may be a few Days, will make present to us? When we are so near the Grave, cannot we look a little beyond it, and by an Eye of Faith, contemplate the endless Happiness of good Men, and the endless Miseries of the Wicked: This is what the Apostle means by *looking at the things which are not seen*, to have our Eyes fixt upon the other World as if it were present; and there is very great Reason for it, for though these eternal Things are not yet present to us,
yet

yet Eternity is. Though we do not yet see that eternal and unchangeable State of Happiness or Misery, yet we now know as well what Eternity signifies, as ever we shall do; and therefore we may contemplate the Nature of Eternity, and deeply affect our Minds with the Hope and Fear of it.

Though our Life in this World is short and perishing, yet our Souls are immortal, and therefore we are already immortal Creatures; and an immortal Creature from the first Moment of his Being is in Eternity, because he can never wholly die, or cease to be: So that Eternity, as it signifies an endless Duration, is as much present to us now, as ever it will be, though we are not yet in that unchangeable State, which shall last for ever. And does it not become an eternal Being to think of Eternity, when, though we shall not always be what we now are, yet we shall always be; and a Creature which shall always be, ought above all to look at those unseen Things which shall always be.

An immortal Creature which must live for ever, is very little concerned in a changeable and vanishing State; for what do threescore or fourscore Years signify, when we must live for ever? They bear no Proportion to Eternity, and therefore can challenge but a very little Share and Interest in our Thoughts: An immortal Creature must design nothing less than an immortal Happiness, because nothing less is commensurate to our Being; and
for

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for the same Reason that we desire to be happy, we must desire to be happy as long as we are.

No Time can be too soon for such Thoughts, because an immortal Creature should never live a Day without them : Were we to spend Eternity in an endless Round of Changes, we should be no farther concerned, than to make every State of Life as easy and entertaining as we could : But when we know this World is the only changeable Scene, and that we must pass from hence into an eternal and unchangeable State, and that we must be either happy or miserable for ever, according as we behave ourselves in this World ; not to make eternal Happiness the commanding and governing Design of our Lives, or to run any Hazard of it, for the sake of present Things, is such a Degeneracy of an immortal Nature, that such Men very well deserve, if not to forfeit immortal Being, yet to forfeit immortal Happiness.

But not to dissemble any Difficulties, I will propose this Case as fairly as any one can desire. No man is so perfectly brutish, as absolutely to prefer Time before Eternity ; every Man had rather live for ever ; but the Difficulty is, when we may live threescore or fourscore Years in this World, (which though it be nothing to Eternity, yet is a very long State of Temptation) to deny ourselves for so long a Time, the present Pleasures and Satisfaction

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fections of Life, for the absent and unknown, though the endless Happiness of the next Life. The pretended Difficulties you see, are the present uneasy Restraints which the Practice of Virtue lays upon our sensual Inclinations, and that we must deny ourselves these present Satisfactions for the long Expectation of an absent and unknown Happiness.

Now I shall not at present dispute the Point between Virtue and Licentiousness, which of them contributes most to the present Ease and Pleasure of Life: But to make you sensible, how unreasonable an Objection this is, I will put you another Case. Suppose, instead of the Promise of Heaven, God had promised immortal Life in this World to the Practice of Virtue; that this World should have been a Paradise to all virtuous Men, where they should have lived for ever; and that wicked Men should have lived a very little while, nay, suppose the longest Period of human Life, in this World, and then have been cut off by some exemplary Punishment, and have perished in the Grave, what would you think reasonable in this Case? To choose a virtuous Immortality, or the short and dying Pleasures of Sin? You could not pretend in this Case, that the Rewards were absent and unknown, for they would be present and sensible, they would be seen Things, as all the Happiness of this Life is: But the Difficulties of Virtue
(till

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(till we had brought our earthly Appetites and Passions under Government) would be the same that they are now: And if you would think it reasonable to be virtuous for an earthly Immortality, (as I persuade myself most Men would) I cannot imagine, that it would weaken the Argument, to translate this immortal Life from Earth to Heaven, which is so much a happier Place than this Earth. And yet I doubt not, but were this the Case, that virtuous Men should be immortal in this World, and none but Sinners should die, Sin would render Men the most contemptible and infamous Creatures, to prefer the short Extravagancies of Vice before a virtuous Immortality. In short, the Difference between Time and Eternity is such a Reason as no Difficulties can answer: Eternal Happiness is an abundant Recompence for any temporal Sufferings, and whatever the Difficulties of Virtue and Religion may be, they must not be compared with eternal Miseries.

2dly. As there is a vast Difference between Time and Eternity, so there is as vast a Difference between Things Temporal and Things Eternal. I do not intend at present to represent to you the eternal Happiness or Miseries of the next Life, as I find them described in Scripture; nor either lessen the Happiness, or aggravate the Sufferings of this present Life; but shall keep close to my Argument, and
only

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only consider the Difference, which Time and Eternity make between Things; and a very few Words will explain this: For it is evident, that whatever is subject to Time, is liable to Changes, Revolutions, Intermiſſions; but what is eternal hath an unchangeable Nature, and is always the ſame. And what a vaſt Difference does this make between the Happineſs and Miſeries of this perſhable Life, and the eternal Happineſs, and Miſeries of the next?

The Happineſs of this Life can't be very valuable, becauſe it is not conſtant, the Enjoyments of it are frequently delayed, diſappointed, or interrupted; and the Miſeries of it are not ſo very formidable, becauſe they have their Allays and Intermiſſions too, and cannot continue long in great Extremity: This is the Nature of temporal Things to change and alter, which leſſens the Pleaſures, and tempers the Miſeries of Life: But an eternal, conſtant, uninterrupted Happineſs, an eternal, conſtant, uninterrupted Miſery, a Happineſs and Miſery without any End, and without any Intermiſſion or Allay; this is perfect Happineſs and perfect Miſery, infinitely more to be deſired, and feared, than what Time can alter. This repreſents temporal Things as in themſelves of no great Value, and gives a natural Preference to eternal Things: Which is the Reaſon of our Saviour's Exhortation; *Lay not up for yourſelves treasures on earth, where moth and ruſt doth cor-*

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rupt, and where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal. This makes a natural Subordination between temporal and eternal Things, and justifies the Wisdom of our Choice in making to ourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations: Or like that wise Merchant in the Gospel, who having found a treasure hid in a field, went and sold all that he had, and bought that field. This is sufficient to convince those Men, who believe another Life, of the Reasonableness of this Choice, to govern our Lives by the Faith and Hope of unseen Things, not to look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen Bad Men themselves feel the Force of this Argument, and have no way to avoid it, but by making these unseen Things more invisible than they really are: They love these seen Things so well, though they are but temporal, that they are not willing to believe there are any such unseen eternal Things, which they are convinced ought to have the Preference, if there be any such eternal Things: And therefore, for a Conclusion, I shall briefly reason the Case with these Men, not directly to prove the Certainty of another World; but to shew them, how unreasonable and dangerous it is to entertain such an

Aversion,

Aversion, as they manifestly betray, to the Belief of it.

For can any thing be more infamous than an Aversion to the Belief of Immortality? Is any thing more natural to Mankind, than the Desire of Immortality? Next to the Fears of being miserable for ever, is there a more terrible Thought than falling into nothing? And how unnatural then is it for Men to be afraid of believing themselves immortal, and to take great Pains to persuade themselves against all the Hopes and Inclinations of Nature, that they shall die like Beasts; and to appear never better pleased, than when they can start some Difficulties to weaken the Belief and Hope of another World.

True, you'll say, this seems somewhat unnatural, but this is partially represented, and not the whole of the Case; the Gospel of Christ, which promises eternal Life to all Penitents, threatens eternal Death too against all impenitent Sinners; and if, upon the Authority of the Gospel, we believe the Resurrection of the Just unto immortal Life, we must believe the Resurrection of the Wicked to eternal Punishments; and these are such terrible things, that it is more desirable there should be no Heaven than that there should be a Hell; and they had rather reject these great Hopes, than take the Hope and the Fear together.

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This no doubt is the true Reason of Mens Infidelity, not that they absolutely depise immortal Life, the Desire of which is so natural and necessary; but that they fear eternal Miseries: And yet in this Case it is very unnatural to reject the Belief and Hope of immortal Life: For the Desire of Immortality is the first and most necessary Desire of Nature, and therefore ought to govern all other Desires, for it is unnatural to prefer any thing before it. As fond as Men are of their Sins, yet any Man of Understanding would be ashamed to own, that he had rather enjoy his Lusts thirty or forty Years, than be immortal. The Design of Infidelity is not only to cure Mens Fears, but to salve their Reputation, and to make their Vices less infamous. If there be no Life after this, *let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die*, seems natural and reasonable enough; but to eat and drink, and riot away Immortality, must make a Man infamous. Suppose God had promised immortal Life to good Men, and threatned, not eternal Punishments, but Annihilation to the Wicked. When eternal Punishments were removed out of the Way, would you have thought it reasonable then to believe Immortality, and to live virtuously for the Hopes of Immortality? Would you have thought it infamous then to prefer Sin and Annihilation, before Virtue and Immortality; and is it not infamous then for the Love of Sin, to reject the Hopes of Immortality, and

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to hope for Annihilation, as such Men generally do ; if we think it reasonable to serve God, that we may be immortal, and that it would be infamous not to do so, supposing the certain Knowledge of immortal Life ; then the Threatnings of eternal Punishments can be no reasonable Prejudice against the Belief of Immortality ; for there is no Reason to reject the hopes of immortal Life for fear of such Miseries, as we may escape if we please ; that is, if we believe and choose immortal Life : No Man who does not prefer something else, or to speak plainly, who does not prefer the short Pleasures of Sin before immortal Life, need fear eternal Miseries ; and therefore it is not the Fear of eternal Miseries, which they know they may escape, but the Contempt of eternal Life which makes them Infidels, and it concerns them to consider well, what the Consequences of this are.

For, *First*, as I have already observed, and there needs no great Proof of it, nothing can be more infamous, than to contradict the most noble and generous Desires of human Nature : To be afraid to be immortal, is to desire to be a Beast, and to perish like a Beast ; nay, it is to desire what no Beast would desire ; for Self-love and Self-preservation is implanted even in the brutal Nature : And what a prodigious Degeneracy is it of human Nature, for Men to hate themselves and

D d 2 their

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their own Being, and to wish and hope that they may perish in the Grave. It is a vain thing to set up for the Reputation of Wit and Philosophy in this Cause, for human Nature is against them, and therefore the generality of Mankind, who will always hope and desire on Nature's side, will be against them too; and Nature so abhors the Thoughts of Annihilation and Dissolution, that all Men must despise those as very contemptible Creatures, who can be contented to fall into nothing themselves, and abhor them for their malicious Attempts to deprive other Men of the Hope of Immortality.

Secondly, It is a strong Presumption against Infidelity, that it contradicts the Hopes and Desires of Nature. Are there any other natural Desires and Appetites which have no natural Objects to answer them? And why should we think, that Nature should implant in us a Desire of Immortality, if we were not made to be immortal: This cannot be, if we were made by a wise Being; for then all the Desires and Appetites of Nature must be wisely made, that is, fitted to the Nature of that Being to which they belong, and then immortal Desires can belong only to an immortal Nature.

Thirdly, It also ought to be well considered, that this makes Infidelity the most inexcusable Sin, for to reject not only all supernatural Evidence, but all the Desires and Inclinations

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tions of Nature, will admit of no Excuse. This is an Apostacy from human Nature, and though the divine Goodness has a great Tenderness for human Infirmities, yet when Men wilfully put off human Nature, they have no Right to the Excuses, or to the Compassion which is due to Men. And such Men ought to be very sure, that they are in the right, who have no Excuse to make, if they are in the wrong.

Fourthly, And yet it is impossible to be secure against the Inclinations, Desires, and Sentiments of Nature. It is possible with great Art and Violence, for some time to stifle the Sense of Nature, but Nature will take some Occasion or other to get loose, and to revive our Fears, when we have forfeited all our Hopes.

For 1. It is certain there can be no Demonstration against Nature. If the natural Desires of Immortality do not prove that we are immortal, yet they are a Bar against all demonstration that we are not : For that would be an ill-contrived Nature indeed, which should have natural Desires and Appetites against Demonstration. That should have a great Passion for Immortality, when it is demonstrable that we are not immortal. And if they cannot demonstrate that we are not immortal, we shall certainly hope and fear on Nature's side : And what will all the boast-

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ing Pretences to Infidelity signify, if they cannot cure our natural Hopes and Fears?

2. For natural Fears and Hopes are very mechanical Passions, and not under the Government of our Wills and arbitrary Opinions. They are no more to be silenced with Wit and Sophistry, than some natural Antipathies are, which Men may think to reason away, but as soon as the Object of that Antipathy appears, all their Arguments are lost, and they sweat, and tremble, and fly: And thus do Infidels too, who please themselves, that they can reason away another World into a Fairy Land, but yet cannot think seriously of it without trembling.

3. For whatever Baffle Men put upon their Faith, yet these Hopes and Fears are so natural, that they can never persuade themselves, that what is reported of the other World, does not deserve to be hoped or feared. No Argument can convince any Man, that it is not desirable to live for ever, or that it is not the most terrible thing of all, to be miserable for ever, and then it is impossible not to hope and fear. The Desires of a less Happiness, or the Fears of a less Misery may be conquered; but when Men hear of eternal Happiness and eternal Misery, the one the most desirable, the other the most formidable thing to human Nature, it makes it impossible to any thinking Man, neither to desire nor fear.

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This shews, how vain it is to struggle against Nature; for Nature will be too strong for all our Pretences to Wit and Philosophy; and thus all Infidels find it is at one time or other.

4. I shall add but one thing more; since the Desire of Immortality is so natural, consider what an eternal Torment this must be, if we lose immortal Life by our Infidelity. Natural Appetites last as long as Nature does, and when they are disappointed, especially if it be by our own Fault, will torment us as long as they last. Now besides all the positive Miseries, which our Saviour threatens against Infidels, here is a natural Cause and Demonstration of their Misery: The very Loss of eternal Life must eternally torment them, because they must eternally desire it; and these disappointed Desires will turn into eternal Anguish, Despair, and Self-revenge.

Would but Men seriously consider these things, *how unnatural the Inclinations to Infidelity are*, and how unnatural the Aversion to the Belief of Immortality is, and what terrible Consequences they have, it would make them willing and desirous to believe, and then they would find no want of Evidence. There would not be so much need then of disputing against Infidelity, but we might employ our Time much better in exhorting and persuading you to the conscientious Practice of our most holy Religion, that we may obtain the End of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls.

Which God, &c.

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S E R M O N XVII.

Preached at the *Temple Church*.

Isaiah, v. 20, 21.

Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

Wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight,

IT gives great Disturbance to good Men, not only to observe the general Corruption of Manners that is in the World, but the Means whereby Mankind are now corrupted: That the very Notions of moral Good and Evil
are

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are almost lost among us, that Men call *evil good, and good evil, darkness light, and light darkness; bitter sweet, and sweet bitter*; and shew their Good-will to change the Natures as well as Names of Things, were that in their Power.

This may seem new and surprising to Men unacquainted with the State of former Ages; but even upon this Account there is no new thing under the Sun. Men have been as wicked in former Ages as they are now, and have taken the same Ways to justify their Wickedness, and to harden themselves in Sin, that they do now. As great a Degeneracy as this is of human Nature, the Prophet assures us in my Text, that there were such Men in his Days, who called *evil good, and good evil*, and thus it is likely to be to the End of the World; and yet there will always be a Succession of good Men, and the eternal Differences of Good and Evil will never be lost: But then Good Men must endeavour by all wise Arts to preserve a Sense of Piety and Virtue, to vindicate Religion from the Attempts of Atheists and Infidels, and to put a stop to the growing Evil: For this reason God by his Prophet denounceth a Woe against such Men; which it shall be my Business at present to explain to you.

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- I. I shall explain the several Terms in my Text, what it is to *call evil good, and good evil*; to *put darkness for light, and light for darkness*; to *put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*: And who those are, *that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight*.
- II. I shall inquire, how Men come to judge thus perversely of Things, which is intimated in the Order here observed: That they first call *evil good*, and then *good evil*; first *put darkness for light*, and then *light for darkness*; first *bitter for sweet*, and then *sweet for bitter*.
- III. I shall consider the Woe denounced against these Men, and how unavoidable it is.

I. To explain the Terms. And *First*, What is meant by *calling evil good, and good evil*. For are there any Men in the World so senseless or impudent as to affirm, that what Mankind call Sins are Virtues, or what they call Virtues are Sins, I never heard of such Men; and I believe there are no such Men to be found: For there is no Fault which Atheists themselves can find with those which we call *moral Virtues*; such as Justice and Charity, Meekness, Humility, Patience, Temperance, Chastity, and the like, but that they do not agree with their Inclinations and Interests, and they desire to be at liberty from such Restraints, to live as they like best:
They

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They are not pleas'd, that the one should be thought essentially Good, and the other Evil; or that the one should be thought commanded, and the other forbidden by a divine Law, which makes them accountable to a superior Lord and Judge for what they do. But if you will not call them Sins or Virtues, nor pretend a divine Law for it, they will allow, what we call *moral Virtues*, to be good Rules of Life, and very necessary for the prudent Government of human Societies, and such as Mankind ought to agree in for their own Sakes, and for the common Good; and that the contrary Vices are great and public Mischiefs, which ought to be restrained and punished by civil Laws: They are very well contented, and think it necessary that Men should make them Laws, but not God: For this still leaves them at liberty to transgress these Laws, when they can do it safely, and when their Interest and Inclinations tempt them to it. This indeed is to reject the very Notion of moral Good and Evil, but not in a strict Sense to *call evil good*, or *good evil*; for they allow of no such Distinction between Good and Evil in a moral Sense. Though by the way I could never understand what they mean by this; for if the Matter of these Virtues or Vices be such things as are naturally good or evil, then the doing such things must be morally good or evil: For I know no other Notion of moral Good and Evil, but doing or choosing such things as have a natural
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Good and Evil: If to rob our Neighbour of his Estate, to defame him, to abuse his Wife or Daughter, be a great Injury to him, it is a great Wickedness in us: If to defend the Injured and Oppressed, or relieve the Poor and Fatherless, and Widows, be a great Good to them, it is a great Virtue in us. And I know not what other Sanction Men would have for natural Laws, but the natural Good or Evil of Things: And if there be an essential and eternal Difference between natural Good and Evil, Nature has made an essential Difference between doing Good and Evil, that is, between Virtue and Vice.

But to let this pass; since these Men discard all the moral Differences of Good and Evil, and yet own, that what we call Virtues do a great deal of Good, and what we call Vices do great Hurt and Mischief, the Difficulty remains, in what Sense any Man can be charged with *calling evil good, and good evil*, and I can think but of two Accounts of this Matter.

1. That they make their own Appetites, Interests, and Inclinations the only Rule and Measure of Good and Evil; as they must necessarily do, when they allow of no common Rule and Standard for all Mankind: For if, as these Men persuade themselves, there be no Law either of God or Nature to distinguish between Good and Evil, there can be no other Distinction but what every Man's

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Man's own Appetite and Inclination makes for him; that is his Good, which he best likes, and that his Evil, which he does not like. Good and Evil signify nothing more, but what pleases or displeases him; and therefore when he feels himself highly pleased and gratified with what the rest of Mankind think a great Evil, and really is so, he laughs at their Ignorance and Folly, and calls and chooses it as his Good; and when that which is really Good crosses his Interests and Inclinations, he rejects it as a great Evil. When such Men think it their Interest to be Unjust, or their Inclinations tempt them to be Unchaste, they don't think such Actions Virtues, for they disown that Name; but they think them Good, that is, profitable and pleasing; nor do they think Justice, Temperance, and Chastity to be Vices, but great Evils, as contrary to their Gain or Pleasure, which is to call that which is morally Good, Evil, and that which is morally Evil, Good.

2. Besides this, the better to excuse themselves from the Shame and Reproach of such Actions (which will be always infamous, when they have done and said all they can) though they dare not call Vice Virtue, nor Virtue Vice, yet they give good Names, which are the Appendages and Properties of some Virtues to their Vices, and bad Names to Virtue. This is so common, and so well known, that I need not insist on it.

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An easy, obliging, friendly Conversation is very charming, when it is governed by strict Virtue : These Men let the Virtue alone, and justify their Vices as only the Effects and Instances of Good-humour and Sociableness, and of a complying Temper, to make their Company easy, and their Conversation pleasant and entertaining ; and this they think a good Apology for all their Lewdness, Debaucheries, and Profaneness ; which may make them agreeable Company for one another ; but very unfit for the Conversation, not only of good Men, but of prudent and cautious Sinners ; but that is all one, they will have this Good-humour, and that is a good Name, which will suit any Vice which pleases themselves and their Company. Thus to be diligent in our Business, prudent and frugal in our Expences, to mortify our sensual Appetites, and deny the Cravings of Lust, and use our Bodies hardly, are very commendable things, when they are opposed to Idleness and Luxury, and have regard to the Care of our Families, and to make us capable of all Acts of Charity, and to subdue the Flesh to the Spirit, and to make us more devout Worshipers of God : And therefore a meer Earthworm, who does all this for no other End but to get or to save his Money, though he starve himself, and his Family, and the Poor by it, and makes himself a vile Slave all his Days, calls this fordid Covetousness by these good Names,

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Names, of Diligence, Prudence, Frugality, Temperance, Mortification; when in Truth it is nothing but a Love of Money above his Ease and Pleasure, and adoring it as his God.

Thus, on the other hand, Superstition and Hypocrisy are very ill Names; and these at all Adventures they bestow upon Piety and Virtue, to excuse their own Neglect and Contempt of both; as if no Man could be sincere, because there are some Hypocrites, or as if there were no such thing as Religion, because some Men would appear to be religious, who are not, though it is a better Argument for Religion, that even bad Men desire to be thought religious.

Thus an affected Singularity is very offensive and nauseous to all wise Men; and this is their Name for a fullen, inflexible Virtue which will not do a bad thing to please its Company, nor admit bad Men into the Privacies and Familiarities of Conversation; as if there were no Medium between affecting Singularity, and being wicked for Company.

This is the Art of changing Names: Call any Virtue or Vice by its own Name, such as Piety, Justice, Charity, Temperance, Chastity; or Profaneness, Injustice, Drunkenness, Adultery; and they have nothing to say against the one, nor for the other; for these are Names of Honour and Esteem, or of Infamy and Reproach all the World over: But

if they can find any thing in Vice, which bears the least Resemblance to what some Virtues oblige us to, they presently give the Names of those Virtues to their Vices; and if a virtuous Man may do any thing for wise and good Reasons, which has any Likeness or Analogy to what bad Men do for very bad Reasons, they give the Names of those Vices to Virtue, which is in a strict and proper Sense, to call *evil good, and good evil*: And this there are too many guilty of, who are not professed Atheists or Infidels; who think it some Excuse for their Vices, if they can find any thing good to say of them, and an Apology for their Lukewarmness and Indifference in Religion, if they can charge some zealous Professors with Pharisaism and Hypocrisy; but by whomsoever, and for what Reason soever this be done, the Woe belongs to all those who *call evil good, and good evil*.

2dly, What is meant by *putting darknes for light, and light for darknes*. Darknes and Light very often in Scripture signify Vice and Virtue: Sin is the Work of Darknes; to walk in the Light is to live holily, as St. John tells us, 1 John i. 6, 7. *If we say we have fellowship with him, (God) and walk in darknes, live in any Sin, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, if we are holy as God is holy, then have we fellowship one with another; and*

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thus it is the same with calling *evil good* and *good evil*.

But then *Darkness* signifies also Ignorance and Error, false and corrupt Notions of God and Religion; and *Light* a clear and certain Knowledge, especially in Matters of Religion, what concerns the Will of God, and the way to Heaven, as our Saviour tells us, *Light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light*, John iii. 19. And thus we must understand it here: Those Men who call *evil good*, and *good evil*, who reject the moral Differences of Good and Evil, and confound the Names of Virtue and Vice, pervert all the Principles of Knowledge, and Rules of judging between Good and Evil; they put *darkness for light*, call all the arbitrary and ridiculous Principles of Atheism and Infidelity *Light*, and esteem them as the most true and certain Knowledge, though indeed they teach us nothing, but reduce us to the most perfect State of Ignorance, by unteaching all that Mankind knew before; for if there be no God, and no Difference between Good and Evil, there is an End of all Knowledge, which is the Light of the Mind; for the next Step is to put *light for darkness*, to reject all the natural, and all the supernatural Means of Knowledge, the natural Notions of our Minds, the natural Light of Reason, and the supernatural Light of Revelation, as mere Ignorance and Imposture, the Cheats of Education

cation or of a timorous Fancy, or the Cunning of Statesmen, or the Inventions of Priests: Such Men you know there are in the World, and this Woe belongs to them.

3dly. *To put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter* is a Corruption, not merely of our Judgment, but of our natural Sensation, of our natural Taste and Relish of Things: *Bitter* signifies whatever is naturally uneasy, grievous, offensive, as bitter Things are to the Palate; that which causes Trouble, Anguish, Remorse, as all wicked Actions naturally do; now such things as are grievous and afflicting to all the rest of Mankind, who have any natural Sense left, these Men call *sweet*, account their Pleasure and Happiness: But then what is naturally sweet, hath a natural Easiness, Pleasure, Satisfaction, as all good and virtuous Actions have; this they call *bitter*, these are the Grievances of their Life, an intollerable Yoke, which they cannot and will not bear. This is the most degenerate State of human Nature, which hath lost all Relish of Virtue, and all Sense of Shame, and Fear, and Remorse when they do evil; their Minds are perfectly dead and stupid, without any rational or spiritual Sensations; they have nothing but their bodily Senses left, and by these alone they judge of Sweet and Bitter; what gratifies their bodily Senses, that is their Pleasure and Happiness, without any regard to Virtue, Modesty, or Honour; what lays

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Restraints upon their sensual Inclinations, that is bitter, uneasy, and grievous; and no wonder that there is a Woe denounced against these Men.

4thly, Woe be to them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight. Where the Prophet speaks of the same Men still; *those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; and yet think themselves the only wise Men in the World, though they contradict the Sense of all Mankind, the natural uncorrupted Sense of their own Minds, the Light of Nature and the Word of God.* This is the just Character of Atheists and Infidels, who think themselves the only Wits, the only Philosophers, and laugh at all the rest of the World as easy, credulous, unthinking Fools; who are under the Tyranny of Custom and popular Opinions, which exposes them to all other Cheats. They think it an Argument of Wit and profound Thought to contradict all Mankind; for there are but few wise Men they say in the World, and the most are usually in the wrong, which may be allowed as to improved Knowledge, which is gained by laborious Study and Observation; but the Folly lies on the other side, when Men advance Paradoxes, which contradict the universal Sense of Nature; for in such Cases the most are likely to be in the right, because natural Productions
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are more common than Monsters; that a wise Man will rather think and judge with the Multitude, when they think on Nature's side, than with the most famed Philosophers against Nature: But those who affect to contradict the rest of the World, must think themselves the only wise Men, if they think at all; that we have no more Reason to wonder at their Pride and Insolence than at their Atheism and Infidelity.

II. Let us now inquire how these Men come to sink into degenerate a State, as one would think impossible to a reasonable Nature; and that is intimated in that Order which is observed in my Text; that they first *call evil good*, and then *good evil*; first *put darkness for light*, and then *light for darkness*, &c. As to consider this particularly.

1st. They begin with calling *evil good*, for no Man can begin with calling *good evil*: Nature will have the first Word, and pass the first Judgment on Things; and Nature, as corrupt as it is, till it be depraved and vitiated by evil Customs, will call Good, Good; and Evil, Evil. Atheists and Infidels must confess, that as wise as they think themselves now, there was a time when they were as very Fools as the rest of the World, that is, when they had the same Opinions about Good and Evil, which the rest of Mankind still have; when they did own a moral Difference between Good and Evil, and called Good and

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Evil by their right Names ; and it is as certain, that the only Reason for altering their Opinions, and changing the Names of Good and Evil, was changing their Manners ; that they grew very fond of what they themselves as well as the foolish Multitude thought and called Evil, and then they began to think and to call it Good, and the necessary Consequence of this is to call Good Evil ; and as unwilling as they are to own this, it is demonstrable there can be no other Reason for it.

Though these Men could prove (which they will never be able to do) that there is no moral, essential, immutable Difference between Good and Evil, between Virtue and Vice, yet this is no reason to call Evil Good, or Good Evil; for though they were neither Sins nor Virtues, neither forbid nor commanded by a divine Law, yet they themselves confess, as I observed before, that what we call Virtues have so much Good in them, that they are the best and wisest Rules of Society and Conversation, necessary to secure every Man's private Interest, and the Peace and good Government of the World, and therefore fit to be encouraged, and to be made Laws in all civiliz'd Nations ; and that what we call Sins have so much Evil in them, that they are very destructive to human Societies, and deserve to be restrained and punished ; and then it is certain there never can be any reason to call Evil Good, and Good Evil, which

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which by their own Confession is a direct contradiction to the Nature of Things; it is to call that Evil, which they themselves own to be a great and public Good, and that Good which they own to be a public Mischief, which there never can be any Reason for: So that the Case is plain, it is not Reason but Lust which calls Evil Good, and Good Evil; till Lust prevails above Reason, Virtue, and Vice, Good and Evil keep those Names which God and Nature has given them, and such Men offer as much Force and Violence to their natural Understanding, when they call Evil Good, and Good Evil, as they do to natural Conscience, when they choose the Evil, and refuse the Good. This is Answer enough to such Men, who would reason or laugh away the Distinction between Good and Evil, and ought to be a Warning to us all, how we engage in a Course of Wickedness; for how much soever we despise and abhor these wicked Principles, we shall soon think as these Men do, if we grow as wicked as they are.

2dly, These Men first *put darkness for light*, and then *light for darkness*. Men are not born stark blind, but have the Light of Reason to discern the natural Differences of Things, and to direct their Lives; and as weak and defective as mere natural Reason is, especially in Matters of Religion and another World, it directs us to a safer Guide: For Reason

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itself teaches us to believe God, who cannot deceive us, and can itself judge of the external and visible Marks of a Revelation; that is, can judge when God speaks, and what we must receive as taught by God. This is the Light of Mankind, the Light of Reason or Revelation, what Nature teaches, or what God reveals: And all Mankind at first both see and own this Light; for no Man is born an Atheist or an Infidel: But bad Men, who have corrupted their Manners, and cannot justify their Vices, nor quiet their Consciences, if they attend either to the Light of Nature or Revelation, must seek for other Remedies; and this makes them espouse the Principles of Atheism and Infidelity; and these they call Light, which in Truth is a mere *Ægyptian* Darkness; and then they must call Light Darkness, reject and scorn both the natural Dictates of Reason, and the supernatural Revelation of the divine Will, as Ignorance and Darkness.

Now, whatever opinion Men have of their Philosophy, yet how they should learn what neither Nature nor God teaches them, or how they should discover, that what all the rest of the World believe, that God and Nature has taught them, is false, is a Mystery to me: And the only Account that can be given of it, is what our Saviour gives, *That light is come into the world, and men love darkness*

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ness rather than light, because their deeds are evil: And when they love Darkness, it is no wonder that they call it Light; but they must first call Darkness Light, before they can put out the Light, and turn it into Darkness.

Now if this be the Truth of the Case, as our own Experience, and our Observations of other Men assure us it is, this is a sufficient Reason to reject all the Principles of Atheism and Infidelity without disputing; for they were not born and bred with us, as what is natural is, and therefore must be owing to the Lusts and Vices of Men, which are the Works of Darkness, and hate the Light; and nothing seems stranger to me, than that of all the Men in the World, these Men should pretend to Reason, who have the least Right or Pretence to it: For what Principles can they reason on, who reject the Light of Nature and of Revelation? What is natural Reason, but the Reason of human Nature? And how shall we know what this is, but by those common Principles of Reason, which Nature has implanted in all Mankind, and which Art, and Wit, and Vice itself, have much ado to silence, and can never perfectly root out? And certainly that is not natural Reason, which contradicts all the Principles of human Nature; and what is that Reason, which is not the Reason of human Nature? Or how is Mankind concerned
in

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in such Reasons as can be no Rule to them, unless they put off human Nature? And indeed this is the Case of these very Men; they have put off human Nature, are degenerated into Brutes; and have the Reason and Understanding of Brutes, espouse such Principles as serve no other End, but to justify the brutal Nature; and therefore laugh at the common Sentiments and Faith of Mankind, and pretend to Reason, only to reason human Nature, as well as Revelation, out of the World. How subtilly soever these Men may dispute, it sufficeth me, that this is not the original Belief of Mankind, and therefore is not owing to God or Nature, but to Lust. No Man can call Light Darknes, till he is in love with Darknes for the sake of the Works of Darknes.

3dly, The same may be said of *putting bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*. Men must first reconcile themselves to Wickedness, which is naturally very bitter, uneasy, and grievous, and shake off all Sense of Shame, and Modesty, and Fear, before they can in good earnest reproach Virtue: For till Men are very wicked, Virtue is the great Pleasure, the truest and sweetest Pleasure of human Nature.

III. Let us now consider the Woe that is denounced against these Men, and how unavoidable it is: *Woe be to them that call evil good, and good evil, &c.* What this Woe is,

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is not here expressed ; but an indefinite Woe is very terrible, for it includes all the Woes that God has any where in Scripture threatned against Sinners, the Vengeance of God in this World, and the eternal Miseries of the next. A Woe signifies a State of extreme Misery, wherein Men shall bewail and lament themselves, without Hope or Redress; all the Miseries that such Sinners deserve, and therefore the greatest that human Nature can suffer ; because this is the greatest Degeneracy of human Nature. And therefore to warn you all of falling into this State, I shall briefly shew you how unavoidable this Woe is.

When Men are so in love with their Sins, that they resolve never to part with them, they vainly think, that the only way to secure to themselves, is to banish God out of the World, and to destroy all the Differences of Good and Evil, and then they may please themselves, and live as they list, without Fear or Shame, or any Danger of a future Account.

Now so far they are in the right, that if they could banish God out of the World, their Work were done, and they might bid defiance to all the Pulpit-thunder, and laugh at all the superstitious Fears of Sinners. But to persuade themselves contrary to the Sense of Nature, and the universal Belief of Mankind, that there is no God, will not banish God out of the World : And if they should
find

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find a God, after they have persuaded themselves there is none, as they certainly will, they will find this God a provoked and terrible Judge: For what greater Contempt and Despise can be offered to God, than to persuade themselves that there is no God? This is a State of open Enmity: They hate God, and would destroy his Being, if they could; for the Reason why they persuade themselves there is no God, is because they would have none; and those who hate God, are hated by him, and must suffer his eternal Vengeance.

Thus, if there were no essential Difference between Good and Evil, they might choose for themselves, and call Things by what Names they pleased, *evil good, and good evil*; but if there be such a Difference, however they have made shift to conquer this Sense at present, if they refuse the Good, and choose the Evil, they must lose all that Happiness, which they might expect from what is a natural Good; that is, all the true Happiness of human Nature, and suffer all those Miseries which those Evils, which are contrary to the Happiness of human Nature, and destructive of it, will expose them to. For Good and Evil are not empty Names; but Good signifies the Happiness of that Nature, whose Good it is, and Evil its Misery: And if after all their Philosophy, there be such a Distinction of Good and Evil with respect
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to human Nature (and that is a strange Nature which has no Good or Evil belonging to it;) to reject the Good must deprive them of Happiness, and to choose the Evil must make them miserable. And if there be a moral as well as natural Difference between Good and Evil, that one deserves to be rewarded, and the other punished, we must expect, that the righteous Judge of the World will reward and punish us according to our Works.

If Men shut their Eyes, or put out the Light, and then *call darkness light, and light darkness*, how secure soever this may make them at present, all that they gain by it, is to go to Hell blindfold, not to see their Danger, before they feel themselves irrecoverably miserable. If there be a Distinction between Light and Darkness, in the moral and spiritual, as well as in the natural World as there must be, if there be any Difference between true Knowledge and Wisdom, and Ignorance and Folly: If the Office of Light be to direct us in the Way to Heaven, those blessed Regions of eternal Light, which those who wander in Darkness can never find: If the necessary Effect of putting Darkness for Light, be to lose the Sight of the other World, both of Heaven and Hell, and the Way that leads to each; if there be still a Heaven and a Hell, as they will certainly find there is, it will be impossible for them either
to

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to get to Heaven, or to miss Hell ; they will lose their Way in the dark to Heaven, but Darkneſs leads directly to Hell, whither no Man will venture to go but in the Dark. Men, who have their Eyes open, and ſee Hell before them, are apt to ſtart, and give back at ſuch a Sight ; but thoſe who can ſhut their Eyes, and put out the Light, and neither ſee a God nor a Judge, Heaven nor Hell, will ſin on, without Fear of Hell, till they feel its Torments. There is no ſuch infallible Way to make ourſelves wicked and miſerable as to ſhut out the Light, which would diſcover to us both our Shame and Danger. And let no Man envy thoſe, who have ſo blinded their Minds, that they can ſin without Shame and Fear, who do not think it a great Happineſs to be eternally damned before they know it.

But there is this further Danger in putting *darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs*, that it ordinarily ſeals Men up to the Day of Deſtruction. Men, who thus wilfully and obſtinately ſhut their Eyes, ſeldom open them again in this World ; and it is too late for them to open them in the next. Such Men do not deſerve, that God ſhould uſe any extraordinary Methods to convince them, and they have already hardened themſelves againſt all the ordinary Means of Grace ; eſpecially when they are arrived at that Degree of Assurance, to be *wiſe in their own eyes,*
and

and prudent in their own sight; to think all Mankind easy, ignorant, credulous Fools, but themselves. There is no way left of dealing with such Men, as with reasonable Creatures; neither Argument nor Authority can prevail, while they believe themselves the only Masters and Judges of Reason, and have judged all before-hand, and have nothing to do, but to keep their Ground, and to reject every thing that is offered for their Conviction with Scorn. This shews how dangerous a State these Men are in, and how little Hope there is, if they be in the wrong, that they should ever see their Mistake, and deliver themselves out of the Snare: And certainly we ought to look well about us, before we shut our Eyes, when there is so little Hope that we shall ever open them again.

Thus when Men *put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*, what is Bitter will prove Bitterness in the latter End. If a Sense of Guilt and Sin be so grievous and tormenting, as all Men feel it is, before they have stupified their Consciences, and corrupted their natural Sense of Things; when this unnatural Force is taken off, when these Opiates have lost their Virtue, and Conscience awakes again, as it will certainly do in the next World, it will awake in a terrible Fright and Fury; never to fall asleep more. When Sinners are convinced of their Wickedness, and of the Displeasure of God, and of the Danger

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ger Sin has brought them into, Repentance itself has its Agonies and Terrors, its Remorse, and Shame, and Fear, but not without Hope: And Repentance as it reforms our Lives, cures our Fears, and heals the Wounds which it made. But when Mens Eyes shall be opened in the next World, to see their Sin and their Misery; when Repentance comes too late to procure a Pardon; when they shall repent with eternal Anguish, Horror, Despair, and Self-revenge, then they will find, what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God, which breeds a Worm in the Conscience, which perpetually gnaws and torments, but never dies.

To conclude. Let this warn us all how we engage in a Course of Sin, which is so apt to pervert our Judgments, to blind our Minds, and to corrupt our natural Sense of Things. Or if we should at any time be conquered by the Temptations of the World and the Flesh, let us rather choose the Shame and the Sorrows of Repentance, than take Sanctuary in Atheism and Infidelity, which may skin over the Wound at present, but cannot heal it; which may give us some present Ease and Relief, but will end in eternal Woe. Let us always preserve a great Sense of God, and of the Differences of Good and Evil, and hearken to the Dictates and Reproofs of natural Conscience and of the Word of God, that we may never fall under the Woe denounced

the Distinctions of Good and Evil. 433

nounced in my Text against those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be Honour, Glory and Power, now, and for ever. Amen.





S E R M O N XVIII.

Preached at the *Temple Church.*

Isaiah v. 20, 21.

Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

Wo unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.

I Have already explained these Words, and shewn, I. What is meant by *calling evil good, and good evil; by putting darkness for light, and light for darkness; by putting bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; and who those are who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.*

F f 2

II. How

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II. How Men come to judge thus perversely of Things.

III. The Wo denounced against such Men, and how unavoidable it is.

But there is one thing which I must observe from the Whole, which may be of great Use to us, *viz. The natural Progress of Wickedness, and what Art and Pains it requires to make a finished and accomplished Sinner.*

In this corrupt State of Nature our sensual Inclinations are very strong, and the first thing we learn, is to please our Senses; and this is apt to corrupt our Lives with all worldly and fleshly Lusts; but still while Men are conscious to themselves in any Instances, that what they do is Evil, and deserves to be punished both by God and Men, they are but very imperfect Beginners; they sin with Shame, and Fear, and Remorse; and it is to be hoped at one time or other, the terrible Rebukes of their own Consciences, and the Fears of future Vengeance may reclaim them; if this does not put a stop to them, but they proceed in an habitual Course of Wickedness, and are resolved not to part with their Sins, it is time for them to consider how to get rid of those tormenting Passions of Shame and Fear.

I. And the first Step to this, is to destroy the essential Differences of Good and Evil,
to

to call Evil Good, and Good Evil: But how hard is it to do this! for, besides the Difficulty of rooting up those natural Notions of Good and Evil, which are so deeply imprinted on our Minds; which, if it be allowed possible, as I believe it is not, must yet be acknowledged to be very difficult, as difficult as it must be to change or unmake our Natures: I say, besides this, what Good did Sin ever do them, that they should call it good? Or, what Hurt did Virtue ever do them, that they should call it Evil? If they would but tell us what they mean by Good and Evil, we might come to some Resolution in this Matter: Nay, if they would but allow that the same thing cannot be Good and Evil in its own Nature, we might soon decide this Controversy. There is not any one Vice, how fond soever they may be of it themselves, but what they will condemn in other Men as a great Evil, especially when they themselves suffer by it; nor any one Virtue, how averse soever they are to practise it, but what they must commend in other Men, as that which does a great deal of Good, especially when they themselves receive Good by it. Now can any Man possibly persuade himself that that is Evil, which at the same time he confesses does a great deal of Good: Or, that to be Good, which he confesses does great Evil and Mischief? Mens Lusts and Vices may persuade them to refuse the Good, and to choose

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the Evil, and to think it very good for them to do so; but it is impossible for them, how much soever they gratify themselves by it, to think those good Actions, which do great Evil and Mischief; or those evil Actions, which do great Good to the World; to think in good earnest that they do Good when they see and know that they do Hurt and Mischief; or that they do Evil, when they do Good: And as long as this Distinction between good and evil Actions lasts, it is impossible for them to get rid of the Notions of Good and Evil.

But this they own, and are not much concerned about it, that in pleasing themselves in the Gratification of their Lusts, which they call Good, they very often grieve and injure other Men; to deny their own Profit, Pleasures, and Satisfaction; nor to grieve and afflict themselves in the Exercise of very expensive and laborious Virtues for other Mens Ease and Pleasure. All that they mean, when they reject the moral Differences of Good and Evil is, that what we call Virtues, do not in their own Nature deserve Praise and Reward, nor Vice, Shame and Punishment; and therefore they are at liberty to choose what they please; and their only natural Rule is to please themselves.

I shall not dispute this Matter with them now, which one would think those who live in human Societies, should be afraid, as well

as ashamed to own, lest Mankind should think it as much their Interest to get rid of them, as they do to destroy all Beasts of Prey; but it seems impossible to me, that Men can really believe this, whatever they say.

That Praise and Shame are in their own Natures inseparable from Virtue and Vice, is not only the Belief of all Men, but what all Men feel. Good Men find the Rewards of Virtue in the Applause of their own Consciences; and the first Revenge that Sin takes upon bad Men, is in the Lashes and Reproaches of their own Minds. *Prima est hæc ultio quod se judice, nemo nocens absolvitur.* And that this is the universal Sense of Mankind, I think needs no other Proof, but that it is the universal Language of Mankind. For in all Languages under Heaven the Names of Virtue and Vice are Names of Honour and Reproach. Natural Perfections or Defects, such as Strength and Beauty, sound Reason, and Vivacity of Wit, or Weakness, Deformity, Ignorance, Folly, or Dulness; or the external Circumstances of Fortune, as Riches or Poverty, Nobility of Birth, or a mean Parentage, a mean or liberal Education, may be brought into Mens Characters; but you can never praise or reproach to any Purpose, but upon account of Virtue or Vice: and should any Man venture to commend another for being unjust, unchaste, or intemperate,

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perate, or to reproach him for the contrary Virtues, he would make himself ridiculous ; for Mankind are unacquainted with such new Terms of Honour and Reproach, which in their Language signify quite contrary : Nay, these very Men who tell you that there is no natural Shame due to Vice, whenever they quarrel, and intend to reproach each other in good earnest (which often happen happens) they always make one Vice or other the Matter of their Reproach, which proves whatever they say, that they do still believe Vice to be very infamous ; or it is a great Misfortune to them, that there is no Language in the World for them to rail at each other in, without confuting their own Philosophy, and blemishing the Honour and Reputation of Vice.

And how is it possible that these Men should persuade themselves that Virtue deserves no Reward, nor Vice Punishment, when they themselves find a kind Resentment, of all good Offices that are done them, and a great Inclination to return them, which is to reward Virtue ; and when they suffer Injuries, they have as sharp and quick a Sense of Revenge, and are as restless and impatient to punish those Injuries, as if they thought they deserved it.

Nay, how dare they say, that Virtue deserves no Reward, nor Sin Punishment, when in so saying they reproach all the wise Governments

vernments in the World, which make it a principal Care to punish Wickedness and reward Virtue, at least, as far as the Peace and Security of the Government is concerned in it; and yet if these Rewards and Punishments are not due by Nature, this is an Encroachment upon the Rights and Liberties of Nature, which I should think as sacred and inviolable as the Liberty of Conscience which these Men are generally so zealous for.

Well! They will allow this too, that it is very fitting and necessary that some Laws should be agreed on for the Preservation and good Government of human Societies; and that Men should submit their natural Liberties to the Restraints of Laws for the Benefit of public Protection; but still this makes no moral Difference between Good or Evil; nor any natural Desert of Rewards and Punishments; but it is all owing to human Compacts and Governments, and can reach no farther, and therefore not to another World; and as for this World, they are contented to take their Fortune in it, to use their natural Liberties as much as they can, and to defend themselves against private Revenge and public Justice as well as they can.

This is an Hypothesis, I confess, which effectually destroys all the moral Differences of Good and Evil, and delivers Men from the Fear of God, and of the Punishments of the next Life; but what thinking Man
can

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can persuade himself to believe this? Or can so firmly believe it, as to give him any Security and Confidence in sinning?

There are no Records, no Symptoms of any such original Contract as this, for Mankind to give up their natural Liberties to the Restraints of arbitrary Laws. The general Consent of all Nations (who had no Communication with each other) in this Distinction between Virtue and Vice, intimates no other Compact but that of a common Nature: And not only the wisest Philosophers, but the universal Voice of Mankind attribute these Laws to Nature, not to human Institutions: And it must appear strange, if these Laws had no higher Original than human Compacts, that Mankind for so many Ages should not know any thing of it, but should mistake them for the Laws of Nature, as after all the Information these Men can give the World, the generality of Mankind do to this Day.

But suppose this Distinction between Virtue and Vice, and those Laws which command the Exercise of Virtue, and forbid Vice, were originally framed and enacted by Men; was there no Reason in the Nature of Things, why they agreed upon such Laws? Yes, they will grant that they were necessary for the Peace, and good Order and Government of human Societies, to secure private Men from Injuries and Violence, and to make

make them helpful and beneficial to each other; and therefore they agreed to make them Laws: But why should we think that God and Nature has not made those Laws which have natural and necessary Reasons to make them Laws? Can mere human Compacts and Governments either make or change the Reasons and Necessities of Things? Can they, if they so pleased, make Virtue Vice, and Vice Virtue; and as well consult the Happiness of Mankind, and the good Government of the World by doing so? If not, then mere human Compacts can neither make nor unmake these Laws. God has made these Laws for us, by making us such Creatures, and giving us such Natures as require such Laws, if we will live by Nature, and attain our natural Happiness; and who then can think that God will not as much exact from us the Observance of these Laws, as Men do? That he will not punish the Breach of these Laws, when human Governments find it necessary to do so? And has God made the Restraints and Punishments of Mens Lusts and Vices necessary, and will he not punish them himself? Especially when the Authority of human Laws and human Government is very precarious without the Awe of Religion, as those Lawgivers were very sensible; who, to give the greater Veneration to their Laws, pretended to receive them from their Gods. It is manifest, that this very Hypothesis which
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allows

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allows no other Difference between Virtue and Vice, but what human Laws and human Contracts make, leaves every Man at liberty to break these Laws when he can do it safely or will venture the Punishment, which is the Reason that makes these Men so fond of it, and shews how necessary a divine Authority is to enforce the Obligation of these Laws, and to secure the very Being of human Societies.

So that those who reason according to the comon Principles of human Nature, can never get rid of the Notions of moral Good and Evil, nor attribute these Laws to any other Author but that God who made us, and fitted our Natures to these Laws; and no Man who believes that God hath given us these Laws, can doubt whether he will punish the Breach of them. But then, if to this we add the more certain Revelation of the Gospel, wherein the *wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men*, this confirms all the Fears of of Nature, and leaves no possible Hopes for Sinners, but *repentance from dead works, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*, that it is impossible for Men, who know any thing of the Gospel of Christ, to sin securely with their Eyes open; and therefore,

2dly, The next Step they take, is to put out their Eyes, or to put out the Light; *to put darkness for light, and light for darkness*; to reject all the common Principles of Reason,

son, and all divine Revelation; as Ignorance, Folly, and Imposture; but what a Task is this? To persuade ourselves that Darknesh is Light, and Light Darknesh? For the common Principles of Reason, which Athiests and Infidels must reject, before they can deny the Being of God, or a divine Revelation, shine as clear and bright in the Mind, as the Light of the Sun does in the Heavens; and the admired Principles of Atheism and Infidelity put out our Eyes, leave no Distinction between Things, nor any certain Rules of judging; as to give some few Instances of this.

There is nothing lies more easy and obvious in our Minds, than the Notion of a first Cause, which gave Being to all things else; I will not dispute this Point now, but alledge it as a first Principle, which Mankind naturally assent to, as the most reasonable Account of the Origin of all things. Now this the Athiest rejects: For if they should allow a first Cause, they must own a God: For the first Cause of all things is a God: And this is the wisest Reason they have against it, though in truth it is a great Confirmation of the natural Notion of a first Cause; because the Belief of a God is as natural and universal, as of a first Cause; and these two Notions, which are both so natural to Mankind, do mutually confirm each other.

But what Account do these Men give of the Origin of all things? They either say the
World

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World is eternal, and always was what it now is ; or that Atoms were eternal, and that the World that now is, was made by chance : But, is this the natural Persuasion of Mankind, that the World had no Beginning and no Cause ; or that it was made by chance ? Is any thing in the World harder to be believed than this, which we can form no possible Notion of ? Nature teaches nothing of all this ; and how then should they come to know it ? when they neither saw the World from Eternity, not saw it made by the fortuitous Jumble of Atoms.

It is certain these Principles differ as Light and Darknes do. To ascribe all things to a first Cause, gives a sensible Account how all things were made, and how they came to be so wisely made, which is Knowledge and Light : But to say that the World was eternal without a Cause, or that it was made by chance, when we see all things in it so wisely made, only confounds and amazes us, and leaves us in Darknes.

Indeed all the Principles of Atheism and Infidelity have nothing natural or enlightning in them, but are a Force upon our Understandings, and destroy all the true Principles of Knowledge.

It is very easy and natural to our Minds to believe that something is eternal ; for if there ever had been nothing, there never could have
been

been any thing: But the Question is, which is most easy and natural to human Understandings; to say, that all things are eternal without a Cause, or to assert one eternal Being, who is the Cause of all things; and every Man may feel the Difference between these two in his own Mind: For the Notion of a first Cause, is as easy and natural as of an eternal Being; and that natural Notion we have of the Relation and Dependence between Causes and Effects, necessarily leads us to the Belief of a first Cause: For if all things were eternal without a Cause, it is hard to conceive how there should ever after be any natural Relation between them of Causes and Effects; and yet destroy the Doctrine of Causes and Effects, and there is an end of all Reason and Discourse. But then, as we have no natural Notion of the Eternity of all things, so all the Appearances of Nature contradict it, and will not suffer it to lie easy in our Minds. We see every Day that all Individuals are made; Men are born every Day and die; and one Generation succeeds another; and thus it is with Beasts, and Birds, and all other Animals; with Trees, and Fruit, and Corn, and Herbs; and is it possible for any Man to believe that any of these things were eternal, when we see that the Individuals of all these several kinds of Beings are daily made: For the World consists of Individuals; and if they are all made, the World was made.

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made. Necessary Existence is essential to the Notion of an eternal Being, which has no Beginning, nor any Cause, and therefore must be always what it is, without the least Change; that to ascribe Eternity to a World, which is subject to perpetual Changes, is as great an Absurdity, as to assert an eternal Succession without a Beginning.

Thus it is very natural to think, that the Effect can have nothing but what the Cause can give it; and therefore we may learn what the invisible Cause is, from visible Effects; that if we see any thing wisely made, we may conclude it had a wise Cause, and therefore nothing can more contradict the natural Sense of our Minds, than to ascribe such a World as we now live in, which discovers such wonderful Art in its Contrivance, to blind and undesigning Chance.

I do not dispute these Matters now, but only consider how unnatural it is to think so; and therefore how very difficult it is for any Man in good earnest to espouse these atheistic Principles.

Thus as for the Principles of Infidelity, how hard is it for any Man to persuade himself that God never revealed himself and his Will to the World any otherwise than by the Works of Creation, when all Mankind have believed otherwise, and are naturally inclined to believe so; and there are great Reasons to think that God will do so, and none to think
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that he will not; especially when we have such evident Proof of this in Prophecy and Miracles, which so strongly persuade the rest of Mankind: For to deny Prophecy and Miracles, when the Matter of Fact is plain; that there have been true Prophecies or Miracles, and no Man besides themselves, who believes a God, doubts whether he can fore-tel things to come, or exercise a sovereign Authority over Nature when he pleases, can be called by no softer Names than Stupidity or Impudence; and whatever they say, it is not so easy for them to believe what they say; for Prophecy and Miracles carry such a Conviction with them of a divine Power, and give such Authority to the Prophet, as is not easily resisted; as is evident from hence, that some of the wisest of these Men dare not deny the Authority of Prophecy and Miracles, could they be assured of the Truth of them; but they hear no Prophecies nor see any Miracles now, and may be imposed on by fabulous Relations, should they be over credulous of such Matters.

This would have been a good Answer, had they only some idle and uncertain Reports of such things; but it can never satisfy themselves, when they have such an authentic History as the Bible, the Old and New Testament for the Foundation of Faith. Can any Man persuade himself to reject the Credit and Authority of all Histories? If he

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can't, whatever he may pretend, he will find it a very hard Matter after all his Criticisms, to disbelieve the Gospel, which is the best attested and most credible History in the World: These are the Difficulties of being an Atheist or Infidel, without which Men can never reject or confound the Differences of Good and Evil, that all these Principles contradict the natural Ideas of our Minds, and destroy all the natural Rules and Measures of Reason, that we can no more distinguish between Truth and Falshood, than between Good and Evil; and if it be possible ever thus to efface the natural Notions of our Minds, yet it must be a very uneasy and difficult Task.

3. And yet it is at least as difficult to put *bitter for sweet*, and *sweet for bitter*. Men may bribe their Understandings, but our natural Passions are not so easily stifled. When the Frame and Constitution of our Natures has annexed Shame, and Fear, and Remorse to bad Actions, which makes them very bitter and grievous in the Review, whatever they were in the Act; it is not laughing at these Fears as superstitious and owing to Education, which will cure them, no more than the Stoics Brags that Pain was no Evil, could prevent their feeling Pain. What is painful, will make us feel it; and Atheists and Infidels themselves, when they think
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they have reasoned and laughed away all their Fears, find that, besides their frequent Misgivings and Jealousies, when any great or surprizing Occasion sets them free, these Passions return on them with such a Fury, as all their Philosophy cannot resist. Now this endangers all again; for natural Shame, and Fear, and Remorse, will make them own an essential Difference between Good and Evil, when they feel it.

4. But let us suppose all these Difficulties conquered, they are sensible that there is one still remaining, *viz.* That all the rest of Mankind are against them. The heathen World owned a God, and as learned Men have proved, one supreme God, though they corrupted both the Notion and Worship of God by Polytheism and Idolatry; but Atheism was so infamous among them, that some atheistic Philosophers, such as *Epicurus* himself, was forced to dissemble it: They owned a moral Difference between Good and Evil; they owned Revelation, and instituted Religions, and had them, though not from God, yet from those evil Spirits whom they worshipped for Gods. The whole *Jewish* Nation own the Writings of *Moses* and the Prophets; and the whole Christian World, whom they are most at present concerned with, own both the Old and New Testament. These are great Authorities against them, which one

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would think should make Men modest, and put them a little out of countenance, and incline them to suspect, that they may be mistaken; but they are sensible that Modesty would undo them, that to suspect whether they are in the Right, is as fatal to them, as to know that they are in the Wrong; and therefore they have no Way left, but to out-face all the World, to laugh at all the rest of Mankind as superstitious credulous Fools; and to think themselves the only wise Men in the World, to be *wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight*. This indeed perfects all the rest; and there is no help for it; for if they will contradict all Mankind, they must think either themselves, or all the rest of Mankind to be Fools.

Now I believe those who are at all acquainted with the Passions of human Nature, cannot think this is a very easy thing to despise the general Sense of Mankind, (which at least looks more like the Sense of Nature, than the private Opinions of some few Philosophers) or to scorn all Men for Fools and Ideots, who ever believed a God and a Providence, the moral Differences of Good and Evil, Revelation, Prophecy and Miracles. Nothing but absolute Demonstration can reasonably harden a Man against such an universal Consent; and it is enough to make any Man to suspect even Demonstration itself, to have all
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the World against him: For we can never think that all Mankind should conspire to resist Demonstration; and yet, by what I have already said, you may easily perceive that they are far enough from demonstrating the Principles of Atheism and Infidelity.

But besides the general Sense of Mankind, which they may despise as an unthinking Multitude (though the less of Thought and Design, the more there appears of Nature in such a general Consent; but I say, besides this) they should consider how many very wise thinking Men, and great Philosophers have in these Points thought as the Multitude do. I will not name *Moses*, and the Prophets, nor Christ and his Apostles, for whom I know they have little Reverence; but what think they of *Pythagoras*, and *Plato*, and *Tully*, and *Seneca*, and *Epicetus*, and many other such Men? Were they all Fools too, and yet they were neither Atheists, nor Infidels, and were zealous Preachers of moral Virtue.

And as for the unthinking Multitude, as they call them, it is worth considering, that the greatest Numbers of them are as wicked as they themselves are, or could wish them to be, that it is sufficiently their Interest to be Atheists and Infidels too; and yet Nature is too strong for their Fears, and they believe a God, and the Difference of Good and Evil,
though

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though they believe and tremble, as the Devils do.

It is wonderful what should give these Men such Confidence to despise all the World, and I can think of no other Reason for it, but that they find it necessary, and the only way they have to be even with the World, that since all Mankind despise them, they will despise all Mankind: But they find this a very unequal Match, and are very uneasy under it: For the Judgment of all Mankind is a persuasive Argument of the Sense of Nature; their despising Mankind is only a Sign of Folly and Impudence. I shall make some few Observations on what I have said, and so conclude.

1st. I observe how the Love of Sin will corrupt Mens natural Sense and Notions of Things, and blind and stupify their Minds. Nothing else but this can make an Atheist or an Infidel. That there wants no Proof of the Being of God, is evident from the general Belief of Mankind; and there is nothing in the Notion of a God, which should make any Man averse to the Belief of a God, but only his Justice in punishing Sinners; and that can make no Man afraid of believing a God, but those who resolve to live in Sin. There is no other Exception Men can take against the Gospel of Christ, which promises Forgiveness of Sins to those who repent
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of their Sins and reform their Lives; but that Repentance and Reformation are made the Gospel Terms of Forgiveness, and Hell-fire is denounced against impenitent Sinners.

If we consider this before-hand, it may convince us how unnatural Sin is, and how foolish Sinners are, Sin can never be reconciled to the Principles of Nature, and Sinners are so foolish as to put out the Light of Nature, that they may transgress the Laws of Nature, which is a very foolish Design, to put out the Light, that we may sin, and not know it, till we feel ourselves eternally damned for it.

2^{dly}. This may satisfy us how difficult a thing it is to sin with Security, much more difficult than to obey the Laws of God. It is a much easier thing to conquer and subdue our sensual Lusts and Appetites, by the Arguments and Motives of Religion, by the Fear of God, and the Rewards and Punishments of the next Life, than it is to deliver ourselves from the Notions of Good and Evil, from the Belief of a God and of the Gospel of Christ; that if we consult our own Ease and Satisfaction, it is much easier to be a good Man, and to be saved, than to live in Sin without the Fears of Damnation.

3^{dly}. I observe how vain a thing it is to be wicked upon Principles. Men of Honour,
2 when

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when they know they do such things as the World accounts infamous, think themselves in Reputation bound to justify them; but those Principles, whereby they pretend to justify their Vices, are more infamous than their Vices themselves; as an Atheist, or Infidel in the Opinion of the World, is a more contemptible Creature than a common Sinner.

All Men, who are liable to Temptations themselves, have a great Compassion for the Weakness of human Nature; but when Men will justify their Vices, and justify them by renouncing God and all Religion; this strikes those, who otherwise it may be are as bad themselves, with Horror and Indignation, makes wise Men despise them, and good Men abhor them; and I wish this general Contempt of them were more public and visible, which would either cure their Atheism and Infidelity, or make them more modest, that they should not appear so *wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.*

4thly. I observe the irrecoverable Condition of these Men, who *call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight:* they have hardened themselves beyond the ordinary Methods

thods of God's Grace, and therefore must unavoidably fall under this Wo: For when Men have wilfully put out their Eyes, and stifled all the natural Notions of their Minds, you may as well think of converting brute Beasts, as of converting them. This is a miserable hopeleſs State: Which God of his infinite Mercy deliver us all from, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord:

*To whom with the Father, and the Holy
Ghoſt, be Honour, Glory, and Power, now
and for ever. Amen.*

THE END of the FIRST VOLUME.





